

The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

JACKSON LIBRARY



CQ

no. 751

Gift of
Janice Hooke Moore
COLLEGE COLLECTION

MOORE, JANICE HOOKE. The Scénologie of the Death of Selected Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Heroines. (1970)
Directed by: Dr. Elizabeth Barineau.

This thesis is an attempt to explicate the death scenes of heroines of the following novels with the hope of drawing from such intrinsic observations the style of each author, comparisons between these styles, and any apparent over-all trends: Manon Lescaut (Prévost), La Nouvelle Héloïse (Rousseau), Atala (Chateaubriand), Notre-Dame de Paris (Hugo), Madame Bovary (Flaubert), and L'Assommoir (Zola). Ranging in date of publication from 1731 to 1877, they present examples of most periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, are among the best-known novels of their time, and are works which might appear in any survey course of the periods involved.

The following method of research was employed. Each novel was considered separately. There was no attempt made to deal with problems of composition, and no outside critical works were consulted. Because these were well-written novels, the death scene would not stand entirely alone and had to be viewed as an integral part of the whole, necessitating examination of larger segments than originally intended. Definition of what constituted "the scene" was easier to ascertain in some cases than in others. Differences in presentation of the death sometimes had to be reflected in a different approach to the work. However, at some point in each novel, a passage or passages were examined with the care that one normally devotes to the analysis

of a poem.

Because this study is based on minute details and evaluations of complex stylistic relationships, a brief summary of conclusions can hardly avoid oversimplification and distortion. One significant conclusion is that, among the first five authors considered, there was a very definite attempt to make a dramatic scene, as in a play, of the dying moments of their heroine. Such an observation led to the choice of the word "scénologie" ("l'art de la scène au théâtre") in the title. The authors' effort took many forms but was usually an attempt to make a passage very dramatic or visual or both. The many techniques employed to achieve these effects were found to include: observation of Classical rules of tragedy; use of melodrama, theatrical-type lighting and stage groupings; very careful choice of vocabulary; and, in every case, the inclusion of poetic prose. The sixth author, Zola, while apparently refusing to make a dramatic scene of his heroine's death, still gave emphasis and importance to it by some of these same stylistic means.

From an historical point of view, six prominent novels produce significant if not conclusive evidence that the trend toward making a production of the death of the heroine seemed to rise to its zenith with Chateaubriand and Hugo, suffer from the apparent parody of Flaubert, and finally disappear almost entirely with Zola. In general the various treatments of the scene reflect, and occasionally exaggerate, the author's Classicism, Romanticism, Realism or Naturalism.

THE SCÉNOLOGIE OF THE DEATH OF SELECTED
" EIGHTEENTH- AND NINETEENTH-
CENTURY HEROINES

by

Janice Moore

"

[Janice Hooke Moore]

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
April, 1970

Approved by

Elizabeth Bauman
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following
committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The
University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser

Elizabeth Barineau

Oral Examination
Committee Members

Mr. P. W. Long

William M. Felt

Randolph Bulgin

April 7, 1970

Date of Examination

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my adviser, Dr. Elizabeth Barineau, and to the members of my Thesis committee, Dr. Philip Couch and Dr. William Felt.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. <u>MANON LESCAUT</u>	8
II. <u>LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE</u>	33
III. <u>ATALA</u>	79
IV. <u>NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS</u>	122
V. <u>MADAME BOVARY</u>	158
VI. <u>L'ASSOMMOIR</u>	200
CONCLUSION	226
BIBLIOGRAPHY	243

INTRODUCTION

My interest in the scénologie of the death of heroines had its beginnings during the course of my graduate studies, in a seminar on Pre-Romanticism. I had just finished reading the death chapter in Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse and was impressed by the sheer number of pages which Rousseau had filled in sending his heroine into the great beyond. The process was extremely elaborate, involving a last supper, and even a false resurrection. I chuckled to myself over the progress women had made in literature since the time of Roland's "la belle Aude," who required only two lines to make her exit from this world.

A little later in the seminar we came upon another dying heroine, Chateaubriand's Atala. Here again the author seemed to have done all in his power to make the death and burial scene beautiful, dramatic, and important. As I read the passage in which Aubry and Chactas dig the grave with their bare hands, I was reminded of a similar scene--that of des Grieux fashioning a grave for Manon Lescaut in much the same manner. Looking backward over previous novels studied, I remembered the strong impression I still retained of the

demise of Emma Bovary. To produce the passage in which he recounted her death, Flaubert had used all his literary prowess. Then, somewhat later, I happened to re-read Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris, and I was struck by the tremendously visual quality of La Esmeralda's death. Gradually, an idle reaction was developing into a constructive idea. The more seriously I contemplated the death scenes in these various novels, the more convinced I became that there must be a thesis subject in the area of a comparison of detailed studies of each.

Subsequently an article appeared in the Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France which eventually set me on course. The pertinent paragraph of the article is as follows:

En 1947-8, M. Jean Pommier, étudiant Madame Bovary dans le cadre de la "chaire d'histoire des créations littéraires" qu'il occupa au Collège de France dès 1946, fit porter une partie de ses recherches sur "ce qu'on pourrait appeler, dit-il, la scénologie." (Jean Pommier, Créations en littérature, Paris, Hachette, 1955, p. 23.) Le nom était né, la discipline ne l'était pas, malgré l'intérêt qu'elle peut présenter. Il tombe pourtant sous le sens que l'art de construire une scène constitue une partie importante de la technique romanesque. D'autre part, les méthodes de l'analyse de textes, qui se sont révélées si fécondes pour l'étude de la poésie et de la nouvelle, peuvent difficilement s'appliquer aux vastes espaces du roman; mais elles peuvent être légitimement considérées comme des échantillons de l'art du romancier. L'examen minutieux de scènes de teneur analogue pourrait ainsi conduire à des recherches comparatives qui n'auraient plus rien d'impressionniste sur l'évolution de l'art romanesque en

général, sur le développement de la technique d'un auteur donné, voire sur les variations auxquelles est soumis, de génération en génération, le traitement romanesque de certains grands thèmes littéraires.¹

I secured Jean Pommier's book, to which Miss Gérard had referred, and found what I considered to be a definite invitation to proceed with exactly the type of research I had in mind. In the chapter alluded to by Miss Gérard, Pommier was discussing three types of expanded research possible in the field of the novel, using Madame Bovary as his example. He had already covered the study of proper names and places as well as geography and topography, and now began the consideration of the third area, "la Scénologie":

Enfin une troisième série de recherches a porté sur ce qu'on pourrait appeler la Scénologie. La pièce de théâtre, c'est une suite de scènes à faire; il n'en est guère autrement du roman. De ce point de vue technique ont été examinés l'épisode de la Vaubyessard et plus généralement les scènes de bal; puis la représentation théâtrale à Rouen, où Emma retrouve Léon; enfin le chapitre des noces d'Emma.

Pour être féconde, cette sorte d'étude comporte des comparaisons attentives, soit entre les oeuvres d'un même auteur, soit entre plusieurs écrivains. Chez Flaubert: bal aristocratique dans une nouvelle de jeunesse Quidquid volueris, et dans Madame Bovary; entre les deux, le bal bourgeois de

¹Michèle Gérard, "La Déclaration d'amour dans le roman romantique, étude de scénologie," Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, Septembre-Octobre, 1968, p. 798.

la première Éducation sentimentale. Ici l'auteur esquive, tout à côté, la description d'un bal masqué; il ne lui consacre qu'un petit nombre de paragraphes dans le roman de 1857; mais il lui donne son développement complet dans l'admirable chapitre de "la fête chez Rosanette" (seconde Éducation sentimentale), où s'étale un art presque excessif. (Il y a ainsi des sujets qui semblent dire à l'écrivain: Quand me traiteras-tu? jusqu'à ce qu'il s'en délivre.) Ainsi rapprochés, ces différents textes laissent voir des ressemblances significatives, une sorte de schéma commun, qui se trouve ici être en rapport étroit, en rapport vital avec la personne du romancier: le personnage principal, ou le témoin, ne danse pas ou ne danse guère; il y a toujours, à la fin, une scène à la fenêtre, où l'on reprend ses esprits. Flaubert souffrait de tournolements de tête et suffoquait facilement.

La noce provinciale est un thème si fréquent qu'on n'a, pour rencontrer des parallèles, qu'à ouvrir Mérimée, George Sand, Maupassant, etc. Comme celle des peintres, l'originalité des écrivains s'aperçoit au mieux dans leur façon de traiter un même sujet: on devient plus sensible à des caractères, à des lacunes, etc. du texte de base, qui échapperaient sans doute si l'on s'en tenait à l'examiner isolément. Pas de bal chez Flaubert, pas de portrait en pied de la mariée, et la couleur locale contrariée par le prestige de la ville, qui s'impose à la campagne: comme on est loin des noces berrichonnes de La Mare au Diable, écrites pour intéresser le lecteur parisien au pittoresque (plus ou moins subsistant) des moeurs provinciales!

Onomastique; géographie et topographie du roman; scénologie comparée, autant de genres de recherches qu'on aurait, semble-t-il, profit à multiplier.²

² Jean Pommier, Créations en littérature (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1955), pp. 22-23.

Thus, M. Pommier furnished the technical word for which I had been searching that would describe the phenomenon I had observed: "la scénologie." In addition to acknowledging the existence, in the novel, of "la scénologie," M. Pommier also spoke of the research value of examining the same type of scene, either in the various works of one author or of several authors, in order to learn more about their individual techniques. Miss Gérard added that one might also profitably observe how different eras have treated the same subject. As examples of subjects for such a scene, M. Pommier mentioned ball scenes and provincial weddings. Miss Gérard, in her article, treated scenes of declarations of love. The "scénologie" of the death of heroines seemed to be a logical continuation of such research.

I now sought to determine the scope of my study. On reconsidering the death scenes which had brought the thesis subject to mind in the first place (Manon Lescaut, La Nouvelle Héloïse, Atala, Notre-Dame de Paris, and Madame Bovary), I realized that with the addition of perhaps one more modern work I would be able to present examples of most periods of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus Zola's L'Assommoir was added to the list. I believe it can be fairly stated that the novels I intend to work with are among the best-known novels of

their time (in which the heroine dies). They are novels which might appear in any survey course as representative of their period.

It seems pertinent to add a word at this point about the method of research which I employed. Each novel was considered separately. There was no attempt made to deal with problems of composition, and no outside critical works of any variety were consulted. At first I tried to define the exact scene to be studied and to do only a detailed explication of that scene. But I soon found that perhaps because these were fine novels, they were so carefully constructed that the scene would not stand entirely alone and had to be viewed as an integral part of the whole. This led to the necessity of picking up threads in the course of the novel which seemed to appear later in the tapestry of the death scene itself. Thus, in each case, a certain amount of the study is devoted to this overall view, in the hope that the explication will then be more meaningful.

Definition of what constituted "the scene" was easy to ascertain in some of the novels, but much more difficult to confine in others. Despite my preconceived goal of treating each work in exactly the same manner, I found that the differences in presentation of the death

by the various authors sometimes had to be reflected in a different approach to their work. However, at some point in each novel, I have isolated at least one passage to study with the care that one gives to the study of a poem, examining every word and every inter-relationship with as much precision and objectivity as possible. One difficulty which arose was that of annotating the rhythm of poetic prose. As a convenience, to show examples where rhythm is present, numerical descriptions were often included. Since I am not dealing with poetry, however, these are merely to be considered as approximations. The attention to detail in the explications will, of necessity, impart an uneven quality to the text at times, but it is hoped that from these intrinsic observations of the work of each author, certain tendencies of the style of each will emerge. An evaluation of these tendencies will appear in every chapter. The comparisons between authors and comments on apparent trends will be left for the concluding chapter, except when they seem to demand immediate attention, as in the case of Flaubert's possible parody of Chateaubriand's Atala.

I. MANON LESCAUT

The first novel in which I will examine the passage dealing with the death of its heroine belongs to a much earlier era than the others. The Abbé Prévost is thought to have published Les Aventures du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut in 1731, some thirty years before Rousseau's La Nouvelle Héloïse and a century and a half before Zola's L'Assommoir, the work with which this study will be concluded. Courses in Pre-Romanticism or the eighteenth-century novel often begin with Manon Lescaut, not only because of its artistic merit, but also because of its early date of publication, its continued reflection of the seventeenth century and its presages of trends to come. It is for these reasons, plus the fact that the death scene of Manon is a celebrated passage, that I have chosen to begin my study with the demise of this charming heroine.

Although Prévost's novel has come to be known as Manon Lescaut,¹ it is interesting to note that in the

¹ Antoine-François Prévost, Histoire du Chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut, ed. by Frédéric Deloffre and Raymond Picard (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1965). All references to Manon Lescaut in my text are to this edition, and page numbers will be indicated within parentheses.

complete title, des Grieux enjoys top billing. This fact will be found to be reflected in the passages under observation. But even the longer title is not the ultimate one, for the novel was merely one volume in the complete work, Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité qui s'est retiré du monde. Thus in considering the matter of point of view in this novel, since "l'homme de qualité" is ostensibly the author, we must examine how Prévost makes the transition to his second and principal narrator, des Grieux. In the first chapter "l'homme de qualité" tells of meeting des Grieux on two occasions--once at Pacy as the latter accompanied Manon, who was being shipped to America with a group of "filles de joie," and again two years later at Calais, when the unfortunate young man had just returned from his harrowing experiences in the New World. At their first meeting, the aristocratic gentleman gives his impressions of the two characters, Manon and des Grieux. Since the novel will subsequently develop into a narration by the latter, this opportunity to describe the hero from an external point of view is most valuable.

At the second meeting, "l'homme de qualité" finally persuades des Grieux to tell his story and bows out of the novel. Thus he has served his literary purpose: his memoirs have furnished a frame for the

novel itself; his reputation stands as a character reference as he gives an outside appraisal of the hero and heroine; he has established an aura of reality and truth concerning the circumstances; and he has finally turned over the whole procedure to des Grieux, from whose exclusive point of view the tale will unfold.

We are not here concerned with the bulk of the novel, which involves the escapades of des Grieux and Manon and their tumultuous love affair in France. However, even at the risk of oversimplification, it is necessary to make some evaluation of the general motivations of the two characters. This summary will, in turn, be followed by a close look at the circumstances in which the lovers find themselves just before the death scene. Throughout the novel, des Grieux is dominated completely by his love for Manon and his desire to find happiness with her. He is willing to sacrifice family, education, money, virtue and even pride toward this end. He feels himself sometimes the victim of a fateful passion and at other times as master of himself, continually seeking a happiness to which he has a right--possession of Manon being essential to that happiness: "J'aime Manon; je tends au travers de mille douleurs à vivre heureux et tranquille auprès d'elle" (p. 91). Manon is a simpler character. She is never

outwardly described beyond the few words of "l'homme de qualite." But even as Helen of Troy's beauty became manifest in the reactions of the old men who watched her, Manon's attractiveness to men shows up in their behavior toward her. Her own passions are easily aroused, easily satisfied, easily transferred, and subservient to a stronger passion--love of the material comforts and pleasures of life.

The story of Manon Lescaut is primarily a story of youth; of life, love, and the pursuit of happiness. Even when the scene shifts to New Orleans there are no real forewarnings of Manon's imminent death in the wilderness, other than a subtle change in her personal relationship with des Grieux and a series of external incidents. In regard to the first of these, des Grieux suddenly discovers, to his great joy, that Manon is returning his affection and is solicitous of his deprivations in their humble dwelling. We can only guess as to the cause of Manon's change in attitude: it is perhaps because she has undergone terrifying experiences in being transported to America and des Grieux has been her salvation; or it may be that she is more content in an atmosphere where no one lives in luxury. At any rate, the happiness which her declarations bring to her young lover serves to point up the tragedy which

will follow so closely.

External circumstances bring about the flight from New Orleans, the ordeal which in turn causes Manon's death. Des Grieux decides that it is time they were married. That such a pious decision causes the governor to separate them is perhaps indicative of Prévost's unorthodox moments. It also serves to make the unfortunate end of the two lovers less deserved and thus more tragic. Although des Grieux has indicated that Manon has greatly changed, Prévost does not necessarily concur. Perhaps had they remained in New Orleans long enough, all would have begun again. For even in her supposedly married state, Manon has managed to capture the desire of the governor's nephew. It is to him that the governor gives Manon, and in an ensuing duel des Grieux is himself wounded and thinks that he has killed the nephew.

When des Grieux tells Manon what has happened she faints and it takes him fifteen minutes to revive her. From this moment to the end, all her words and actions are heroic and full of devotion, Prévost seeming to wish to remove all former signs of flightiness and selfishness from her character, before the coming death scene. Des Grieux offers to surrender himself to the governor and thus to insure her chances of living out her days in New Orleans, but she refuses: "Elle se

leva malgré sa faiblesse; elle me prit par la main, pour me conduire vers la porte. Fuyons ensemble, me dit-elle, ne perdons pas un instant" (p. 196). This reference to her feebleness and another to "la délicatesse de Manon," at the end of the same paragraph, are the first indications of any physical weakness on her part.

The paragraph which immediately precedes the death scene requires some comment. Des Grieux is defending his decision to strike out in the wilderness with Manon, mentioning his hope that natives will help lead them to British settlements. The following quotation does not reveal the strong exoticism which will flourish later in the century, but there is an attempt to suggest a familiarity with the strange new land:

J'avais acquis assez de connaissance du pays depuis près de dix mois que j'étais en Amérique, pour ne pas ignorer de quelle manière on apprivoisait les sauvages. On pouvait se mettre entre leurs mains, sans courir à une mort certaine. J'avais même appris quelques mots de leur langue, et quelques-unes de leurs coutumes dans les diverses occasions que j'avais eues de les voir. (p. 197)

There is also a definite effort made here to evoke the sort of country through which they must pass, but it is mostly expressed in terms of the difficulty which the crossing will entail:

Nous avons à traverser, jusqu'à leurs colonies, de stériles campagnes de plusieurs journées de largeur, et quelques montagnes si hautes et si escarpées que le chemin en paraissait difficile aux hommes les plus grossiers et les plus vigoureux. (p. 197)

The passage which encompasses the death scene and burial, and which will be dealt with in detail, begins: "Nous marchâmes aussi longtemps que le courage de Manon put la soutenir . . . " (p. 198), and ends "Aussi, ne demeurai-je pas longtemps dans la posture où j'étais sur la fosse, sans perdre le peu de connaissance et de sentiment qui me restait" (p. 201). In the course of the five paragraphs it contains, des Grieux tells of the escape into the wilderness, the necessity for stopping to spend the night, the interchange of solicitous acts, the sudden occurrence of death, and the burial. In doing so he slips back and forth from the role of narrator, conscious of the present and of his audience, to that of the actor in his own story, so moved even yet by the telling of it that he becomes once again emotionally involved.

The first sentence is one of three beginning with "nous" which divide the action before death into three parts: it is concerned with the long march; the second sentence recounts their coming to a halt for the night; and the third refers to the tranquil part of

the night, but is actually a signal for the death which comes swiftly. In an effort to create an ominous and melancholy beginning for the fateful journey, Prévost has included eight nasal sounds in the first sentence. The reference to Manon as "cette amante incomparable" is one of several periphrases in the passage, reminiscent of the classical period. The note of formal awe and respect which it carries seems to bring a new tone to the narration and is reinforced by a perceptible rhythm which begins at this point. The last clause of the sentence, "car cette amante incomparable refusa constamment de s'arrêter plus tôt," might be described as 4/4/3/3/4/2. In the sentence which follows, the rhythm is augmented further by the number of words of three beats each, such as "accablée," "lassitude," "confessa," "impossible," "d'avancer," and "davantage." The first three such words are in the first part of the sentence, separated but accented, and are balanced by the last three which run together. Returning to the vocabulary of the first two sentences, des Grieux chooses words which emphasize Manon's courage in walking the approximately five miles (no mean feat for a lady of her day). He maintains that it is that "courage" alone which holds her up in the first place, and as long as it does she refuses "constamment" to stop, implying that

he has been repeatedly suggesting that they do so. Only when she is "accablée de lassitude," a very strong expression, does she confess that she can go no further, giving the impression that her determination has been a brave front, disguising her real condition. Even when she is forced to stop for physical reasons, her "premier soin" is for her lover, not herself.

The following two sentences, though almost without elaboration, describe the scene. It is night. The plain is said to be "vaste," a rather ordinary choice of adjective to modify "plain." But the fact that they are unable to find a tree under which to take cover shows not only that it is a treeless plain, but indicates their complete lack of shelter and utter vulnerability. The remainder of the paragraph is taken up with Manon's attentions to des Grieux, balanced by his own concern for her. The most interesting fact, stylistically speaking, in this series of sentences is that four of them involve her actions and are followed by four involving his. All, except the intervening transitional sentence, begin with "je." Manon is never the subject of the sentence, even when she initiates the action. The total effect is to reveal des Grieux's unusual concentration on his own point of view. The series of "je" sentences also indicates the increase of his

emotional involvement as he tells his tale. There is, at the same time, a certain progress in des Grieux's acceptance of the attentions of his mistress: at the beginning he opposes her will, though in vain; next he gives his excuse for giving in to her; in the third case he submits to her attentions; and in the final sentence he receives them still, but with "honte." Even in the midst of such tragedy, the turnabout of solicitousness in the intervening sentence is somewhat amusing: "Mais, lorsqu'elle eut satisfait sa tendresse, avec quelle ardeur la mienne ne prit-elle pas son tour!" The "mais" for contrast, and the exclamation point at the end of the sentence show that loving as Manon was, des Grieux was more so!

The word "ardeur" is indicative of the warmth which is his and which he will try to pass on to her, when in a subsequent sentence, three "heat" words appear: "J'échauffai ses mains par mes baisers ardents et par la chaleur de mes soupirs." During the course of this series of "je" sentences, des Grieux progresses from trying to comfort Manon by placing his clothing beneath her, to giving her the warmth of his body itself, to ultimately asking help from "le Ciel." Throughout the novel he refers to "le Ciel" much more often than to God. In most situations he seems to mean

a sort of combination of pagan fate and Christian God, with the idea of an impersonal manipulator of destiny more dominant than in the usual religious concept. In this instance he slides easily from one to the other. Finally he addresses God directly, slipping out of his involved role in the tragic past and returning to the present. In doing so he bitterly judges the judgment of God by using the adjective "rigoureux" to describe God's intervention, while he qualifies his own reactions as "vifs et sincères." Here he is not the narrator but is in conversation with God. The three exclamation points reveal the extent of his feelings.

Throughout this paragraph the author's concentration on sound and rhythm is most apparent. The opening sentence features "m," "r," and "t" sounds; later sentences are significant for their repetitions of "s," "p," and "v." There occur five "ou" sounds in the sentence beginning "Je me dépouillai," while the first two sentences have something like thirteen short "a"'s. There are several cases of alliteration such as "d'avancer davantage," "en vain à ses volontés," "ses soins en silence," and "vœux étaient vifs." There is also a certain amount of interior rhyme: "longtemps . . . environ . . . constamment"; "achevé de l'accabler . . . si je lui eusse refusé . . . et sans danger, avant

que de penser"; and "durant quelques moments." The preponderance of nasal sounds, already noted in the first sentence, begins again with "Son premier soin fut de changer le linge . . . ," and there occur some sixteen more nasal sounds in the next five sentences. There are several segments of sentences with six beats: "d'avancer davantage," followed by "Il était déjà nuit," and "pour nous mettre à couvert." Others have an interesting balance such as "Je me soumis durant quelques moments à ses désirs"(4/6/4), and "Son premier soin fut de changer le linge de ma blessure"(also 4/6/4).

With the words "Pardonnez, si j'achève en peu de mots un récit qui me tue," des Grieux pauses for a moment from his role as actor in the preceding paragraph, and returns to that of the narrator, a fact made clear here by the noun "récit" and the verb "raconter," which occurs in the next sentence. Despite the simplicity of the opening sentence, there are overtones of both the classic and the romantic. That he will be brief and concise is certainly a seventeenth-century virtue; that this is a "récit qui me tue" expresses an emotion which is highly personal and romantic. The following sentences are even more romantic as he uses hyperbole to describe "un malheur qui n'eut jamais d'exemple." "Toute

ma vie est destinée à le pleurer," indicating that the net result of the whole event will be a sort of permanent melancholy, is a statement worthy of René himself. Yet the final sentence is a lucid analysis of the lasting emotional effects of such a terrible experience--its memory is ever present, but recounting it brings it back in all its original horror.

Again there appears to be a definite lyric effort on the part of Prévost. The first sentence scans 3/3/4/3/3/, so that it resembles an alexandrine at each end, separated by a word group of four beats. The next one scans 4/3/4/2, and there is a strong caesura. The third sentence is a typical romantic alexandrine, 4/4/4, without caesura. The alexandrine-like rhythm is continued in the first part of the last sentence, which might be described 1/5//2/4. Then there is a falling tendency to a word group of eight beats, then to one of six, and finally to one of four, thus contributing to the mournful quality of the passage.

True to his promise to tell the tragedy "en peu de mots," des Grieux recounts the story of Manon's death in one paragraph. Or, more accurately, he tells the circumstances surrounding that death in this paragraph, and very tersely and almost unwillingly records its actual moment in one single sentence. The

opening sentences of the paragraph reflect a calm and quietness which have persisted during the night, made manifest by such words as "tranquillement," "endormie," and the fact that he did not dare "pousser le moindre souffle, dans la crainte de troubler son sommeil." But the verb in the second sentence is in the past definite, that tense which is so often the signal for the resumption of action, and the time of day is also given, "dès le point du jour." The details are realistic: "Je m'aperçus, en touchant ses mains, qu'elle les avait froides et tremblantes." It should be noted that des Grieux has entered the scene as participant. Five of the ten sentences in the paragraph begin with "je," again indicating emotion. The only sentence which opens with "elle" is the one in which Manon announces that she believes herself "à sa dernière heure." Her words here, which have a definite ecclesiastical ring and are all she speaks after stopping for the night, are conveyed by indirect discourse. There is also a certain amount of realism in the sentence, however, shown by the feebleness of her voice and the fact that it is an effort for her to seize his hands. But des Grieux still does not grasp the seriousness of the situation, though he, too, recognizes that she speaks in a different language. The appearance of the word "mais" is the

signal for his sudden realization that Manon is near death. Three realistic signs, "ses soupirs fréquents, son silence à mes interrogations, le serrement de ses mains," make him reach his conclusion, which he expresses in the language of the Church, "me firent connaître que la fin de ses malheurs approchait." There is much poetry in this beautiful sentence, consisting of the repetition of the "s" sounds, the "r"'s and the liquid "l"'s. Although the rhythm is not strictly that of a poem, there are certain phrases which seem like lost alexandrine hemistiches: "Mais ses soupirs fréquents" and "le serrement de ses mains."

Up until this point in the paragraph, des Grieux has been an actor in the drama, in contrast with his having been the narrator in the paragraph before. With the negative sentence "N'exigez point de moi que je vous décrive mes sentiments, ni que je vous rapporte ses dernières expressions," the two roles seem to fuse into one. There is a complete refusal on the part of des Grieux to disclose the most painful and personal aspects of Manon's death, reflecting either the classical tendency to abstain from presenting the unpleasant in direct form or a sentimentality which maintains there are no words to describe his feelings. In either case, there is a simple statement that she is gone: "Je la

perdis; je reçus d'elle des marques d'amour, au moment même qu'elle expirait." Here again we have a certain rhythm which might be scanned 4/4/5/4/4, perhaps used to slow the reader down to an appreciation of the tragedy in the unadorned sentence. The repeated sounds of "m" and "r" also add to the poetic effect. It is interesting to note that even at the actual moment of Manon's death, Prévost has des Grieux tell the event in terms of "je." We do not have "elle me donna des marques d'amour," but "je reçus d'elle des marques d'amour." The paragraph ends with the narrator alone speaking: "C'est tout ce que j'ai la force de vous apprendre de ce fatal et déplorable événement." Here the two adjectives modifying "événement" are most revealing. That her death was "fatal" means that it was determined by destiny, properly tragic because it could not be avoided, thus placing it in the realm of classical tragedy. That it was "déplorable," on the other hand, is a personal interpretation, charged with emotion, and focuses on the feelings of des Grieux. The two phrases are, interestingly enough, rhythmically balanced 4/4 ("de ce fatal/ et déplorable"). Before leaving this central paragraph in the passage, it might be well to point out the interior rhyme which contributes to its euphony. Examples are: "partie," "nuit," and

"endormie"; "passé," "croyais," "osais," "pousser," and "troubler"; "touchant," "mouvement," and "faisant"; and "fréquent" and "serrement."

The odd blend of romanticism, classicism and realism, which has been apparent thus far in the passage, continues throughout the final paragraph describing the burial. To remain twenty-four hours, "la bouche attachée sur le visage et sur les mains de ma chère Manon," is sentimental and unrealistic. Yet this excess is followed in the next sentence by a return to reason as des Grieux realizes that if he does not bury Manon she will become "la pâture des bêtes sauvages," an almost naturalistic idea. Thus, in his grief, des Grieux has moved from blind physical grief, to reflection, to resolution: "Je formai la résolution de l'enterrer et d'attendre la mort sur la fosse." Finding himself feeble from "jeûne" (physical cause) and "douleur" (mental cause), he resorts to the liqueurs which he has had the foresight to bring. These have the desired effect and enable him to continue with the burial.

At this point the realism gives way to idealism as des Grieux finds the country "couverte de sable," making a non-existent desert of lower Louisiana. He breaks his sword to help dig the ground, a desperate sacrifice for a gentlemen in 1731. But it is more

romantic to dig the grave with his bare hands. This Prévost has him do, but des Grieux states it very quickly and does not dwell on it at all, even though he digs "une large fosse." Within it he places "l'idole de mon coeur," adding another periphrasis to the growing list he has used for Manon.

Throughout this paragraph, Prévost has again been very attentive to sound--there are many "f," "p," "j," "s," repetitions, with certain consonants particularly dominant in each sentence. For example in this sentence there are many recurrences of "p," "s," and "l": "J'y plaçais l'idole de mon coeur, après avoir pris soin de l'envelopper de tous mes habits, pour empêcher le sable de la toucher." The next sentence, beginning "Enfin, mes forces recommençant à s'affaiblir . . . " is remarkable for its "f" sounds in the first half, and "p"'s in the second. The sentence following contains six "v"'s and eleven "s" or "z" sounds. It is of value to count the repetition of sounds because Prévost works them in so artistically and naturally that one is often not aware of them individually, but only aware of the beauty of the passage when read aloud.

Returning to the action of the paragraph, it is interesting to note how Prévost indicates des Grieux's

extreme reluctance to bury Manon. Although other important action has taken place quite briefly, it takes nine agonizing sentences, six beginning with "je," to come to that point, making this struggle perhaps the most revealing of personal feeling of any action in the passage. To postpone the inevitable burial, des Grieux wraps Manon in his clothes and kisses her repeatedly. This first stage of the inevitable separation is expressed negatively: "Je ne la mis dans cet état qu'après l'avoir embrassée mille fois." Three short sentences continue the postponement and convey the depth of despair: "Je m'assis encore près d'elle. Je la considèrai longtemps. Je ne pouvais me résoudre à fermer la fosse." It is noteworthy that he again refers to the separation in the negative and that the last verb, being in the imperfect tense, emphasizes the length of time involved in making a final resolution to act.

We have remarked before on the manner in which des Grieux is sometimes the actor and sometimes the narrator. At the beginning of this paragraph, although he returns to the action, des Grieux remains part narrator and part actor. As the sentences beginning with "je" accumulate, the narrator disappears and the actor takes over, des Grieux actually reliving the scene. It was noted in the three sentences quoted that the

simpler the sentence the more live emotion it seems to express. Conversely, a more complicated sentence, introduced by "enfin" rather than "je," becomes an objective assessment of the situation, and marks the return of the narrator. It also indicates a victory of reason over emotion, as it is for highly practical reasons that des Grieux finally buries Manon, fearing that he will become too feeble to finish the job. Prévost hyperbolizes for the second time in the paragraph. Earlier it was a question of "l'ardeur du plus parfait amour," and here it is another periphrasis for Manon, " . . . j'ensevelis pour toujours, dans le sein de la terre, ce qu'elle avait porté de plus parfait et de plus aimable." The rhythm of this sentence is quite perceptible, the first half of the sentence resembling a classical alexandrine, followed by a word group of six beats, and terminating with the balanced "de plus parfait" and "de plus aimable."

The next sentence, beginning "Je me couchai ensuite sur la fosse . . . ," is quite a remarkable one. It is also perhaps the most visual in the passage in that it describes several physical actions and attitudes, so that we are able to see des Grieux quite clearly-- lying, face down on the sandy grave, eyes closed. Tragic as is his physical attitude, which seems to emulate

death, the state of his mind is even more so. The progress in the sentence is most subtle as it slips from the physical to the mental. Des Grieux lies down, closes his eyes, and "le dessein de ne les ouvrir jamais" introduces the death wish, followed by the appeal to God Himself. Both the physical and the mental impressions converge in the final clause, making the thirst for death quite emphatic: " . . . j'attendis la mort avec impatience."

The abandonment of the characteristic opening "je" and the reference to "vous," the audience, mark the end of the dramatic and visual scene--there remain only the narrator's final comments, which will constitute a psychological self-examination. He speaks now, objectively, and summarizes the entire burial episode with the words "l'exercice de ce lugubre ministère," only the adjective "lugubre" imparting any of his feelings. Des Grieux cites two causes for his lack of sighs and tears, the first rising from his deep emotions, "la consternation profonde où j'étais," and the second from his determined will, "le dessein déterminé de mourir." The expressions of "désespoir" and "douleur" refer to the "larme de mes yeux" and "soupon de ma bouche" of the earlier sentence and represent the physical and mental sides of suffering

respectively. In the final sentence, des Grieux loses both the little reason ("connaissance") and feeling ("sentiment") which he has left. Thus there is a final fading out of the scene into nothingness. The handling of the sounds in these last three sentences is quite interesting. All the sounds which will be emphasized within the sentences, "r," "d," "p," "s," and "k," are present in the first of the first sentence and the last of the last: "Ce qui vous paraîtra difficile à croire . . . " and " . . . sans perdre le peu de connaissance et de sentiment qui me restait."

Before abandoning Manon forever to her sandy grave, we should make a few observations concerning Prévost's handling of her death scene. The matter of point of view has been touched upon at various times during this chapter. Because of the presence of an identified narrator, who has the added credentials of having been at the death scene, one tends to forget that Prévost is the author and creator of des Grieux. Since the narrator can very easily slip into the role of actor whenever convenient, this lends a credibility and a personal quality to the writing. It also accounts for a certain one-sidedness in viewpoint, for whereas an author can be omnipresent, a narrator can only tell of things as he himself sees them. It is perhaps

partially for this reason that the death of Manon is told in terms of des Grieux. The preponderance of sentences beginning with "je" has been pointed out. In certain cases the "je" prevails, even when "elle" would have made a less awkward sentence. The conclusion which one is forced to reach is that although des Grieux's life centers about Manon, the author, Prévost, is really more concerned with his hero than with his heroine.

The most striking stylistic trait of the passage, in my opinion, is its lyricism. There is a definitely premeditated attempt to create an aura of melancholy and tragedy by means of the long sounds. There is a similar effort to give a poetic flavor to an oral reading of the passage through constant repetition of sounds and by means of rhythmic word groupings. At the same time, the style is simple, clear, economical and, for the most part, quite restrained. Thus, in the matter of style, we have one of many points on which Manon Lescaut looks backward to classicism and forward to romanticism.

The hero himself is both a classical and a romantic hero. At times he feels himself to be the victim of "le Ciel," or destiny, and thus a classical tragic hero. At other times he rather proudly chooses

to live forever after a life of permanent melancholy, the result both of his having relentlessly pursued happiness and love, and of his greater capacity for all types of feeling. In addition to the permanent melancholy, des Grieux is also possessed at times of a very strong death wish. On the other hand, he is quite capable of making lucid analysis of himself, even in moments of extreme emotion, a quality more often associated with the classical hero.

There is almost no detailed nature description in the passage under consideration, although there is an evocation of mountains and desert and plain. The plain is "vaste" and without trees and the time is night--everything else is left to the reader's imagination. The only precise information given is the fact that the plain is some five miles outside a definite place, New Orleans. The only adjectives applied to the dying Manon concern her hands which are "froides et tremblantes," her voice which is "faible," and her sighs which are "fréquentes." In this respect Prévost remains almost entirely true to the classical tradition. But in spite of the lack of direct description, close examination of Manon's death has produced a definite picture of an event as it took place. This is the result of some very careful and artistic writing on the part of the author: while

the exact details are left to the reader's imagination, that imagination is painstakingly stimulated by the polished poetic prose of the Abbé Prévost.

II. LA NOUVELLE HÉLOÏSE

Victor Hugo, in writing a review of Walter Scott's Quentin Durward for La Muse Française (July, 1823), made the following caustic remarks concerning epistolary novels:

On peut encore comparer les productions épistolaires à ces laborieuses conversations de sourds-muets, qui s'écrivent réciproquement de qu'ils ont à se dire, de sorte que leur colère ou leur joie est tenue d'avoir sans cesse la plume à la main et l'écritoire en poche. Or, je le demande, que devient l'à-propos d'un tendre reproche qu'il faut porter à la poste? . . . Ne doit-on pas, enfin, supposer quelque vice radical et insurmontable dans un genre de composition qui a pu refroidir parfois l'éloquence brûlante de Rousseau?¹

The alternative form which Hugo was advocating was the historical dramatic novel. The relative merit of the two forms is not the concern of this study, but Hugo's remarks make a good point of departure in considering the advantages and disadvantages of the "roman épistolaire," which is, of course, the form in

¹La Muse Française, ed. Jules Marsan, Société des Textes français modernes (Paris: Edouard Cornély et Cie., 1907-09), I, 31.

which Rousseau wrote his famous La Nouvelle Héloïse.²

The most obvious advantage of this form of novel over the narrative form, which we have just considered with Manon Lescaut, is the fact that the author can present the situation from all viewpoints rather than from one. Thus in this novel we are able to enter the mind of each character, with particular intimacy in the case of the hero and heroine, each of whom has a confidant. We are also able to see events from less prejudiced eyes, as others comment on events from the exterior view. The time lapse which Hugo refers to is less serious here because most of the letters came from short distances and most of the problems were of long duration, the characters having great leisure to contemplate them. This leisure, combined with the historical fact that letter writing was a serious and highly cultivated art of the era, makes the "roman épistolaire" a more appropriate form for the eighteenth-century novel than would be the case today.

What is the effect of the form Rousseau has chosen on the area of the novel with which we will be

²Jean-Jacques Rousseau, La Nouvelle Héloïse, (Paris: Garnier Frères, n.d.). All references to La Nouvelle Héloïse in my text are to this edition, and page numbers will be indicated within parentheses.

concerned--the death of Julie? The first impression is one of artificiality, the result here, as at certain other times in the novel, of the difficulty in imagining that such a letter would really be written. Would Wolmar have sat down the day after his wife's death and written the copious report of that event to her lover, which is the letter in question? Perhaps Rousseau felt that he had built up the character of Wolmar as the man of raison, the humanist, to the extent that such action was plausible. But even so, could Wolmar have possibly remembered Julie's words as exactly as he claimed, in such long discourses as with the preacher? Yet in spite of this artificiality, the letter does seem in this case to serve an artistic purpose. Julie's death, as we will subsequently see, is a long, drawn-out affair encompassing many conversations and events, and yet it is the climax of the novel. The letter serves as the form, the frame for all the diverse facets of the death. Thus when the reader has finished the letter, despite the fact that it covers a series of events, he is left with the complete tableau of all that was a part of Julie de Wolmar dying.

During her long conversation with the minister, Julie sums up her feelings about dying in this sentence: "La préparation à la mort est une bonne vie" (p.618). Her death, then, must also be told in terms of her life.

It does not seem to me an exaggeration to state that Rousseau made of her life a demonstratio, a saint's life in terms of what he himself considered to be the ideal woman. This is apparent in exterior comparisons with the death of Christ, such as the last supper, the false resurrection, and her statement near death: "On m'a fait boire jusqu'à la lie la coupe amère et douce de la sensibilité" (p. 634). But in more subtle fashion, Rousseau shows how this extreme "sensibilité" is the reason for her superiority to others and is also the motivating force within Julie throughout her life. Sometimes this "sensibilité" is in line with what she also considers to be her duty. At other, more critical times, it is in direct conflict with "la vertu," and therein lies her problem.

In contrast to the simplicity of the relationship between the death scene and the rest of the novel, as exhibited in Manon Lescaut, the death scene of Julie is an integral part of the novel as a whole, a fact which would, according to Aristotle, contribute greatly to its dramatic and tragic effect. Although Julie seems to die of pneumonia (we are not really told), Rousseau makes it clear that she is ready to die because she does not trust herself to live and maintain the virtue which is so dear to her. This lack of confidence

comes only when she finally sees herself with lucidity. Progress toward this state of accurate self-analysis and psychological readiness for death begins in her first letter to Saint-Preux, and its attainment is finally disclosed in the last. In the very first paragraph of her first letter to Saint-Preux, Julie defines what to her is the worst death possible: "Hélas! j'ai trop tenu parole: est-il une mort plus cruelle que de survivre à l'honneur?" (p. 8). In the end she dies to avoid just such a death.

It will perhaps be helpful to summarize briefly the various attitudes which our heroine maintains at different times in her life. When she falls in love with Saint-Preux she is in a state of innocence and modesty and she immediately puts Saint-Preux into the unenviable situation in which he must spend the rest of the novel: she will love him as long as they remain virtuous; if they lose this virtue she will lose her desire for him. Their love runs a rocky course including parental disapproval, separation and the death of Julie's mother, to which their conduct is a contributing factor. It is at this time that Julie's father is able to persuade her to marry the older man, M. de Wolmar, to whom he had promised his daughter without her previous knowledge. He extracts this promise from her not through

threats and beatings, which he had previously tried, but through tenderness and love and an appeal to her to save him from the terrible fate of dying dishonored. Shortly after this event Julie becomes ill with smallpox, Saint-Preux visits her while she is delirious, and he almost wilfully contracts the disease. Pulled in two directions by her strong "sentiments," Julie writes to Saint-Preux:

C'en est trop. c'en est trop. Ami, tu as vaincu. Je ne suis point à l'épreuve de tant d'amour; ma résistance est épuisée. . . . Ce triste coeur que tu achetas tant de fois, et qui coûta si cher au tien, t'appartient sans réserve; il fut à toi du premier moment où mes yeux te virent, il te restera jusqu'à mon dernier soupir. . . .

.
Ne pense point que pour te suivre j'abandonne jamais la maison paternelle, n'espère point que je me refuse aux liens que m'impose une autorité sacrée: la cruelle perte de l'un des auteurs de mes jours m'a trop appris à craindre d'affliger l'autre. (pp. 273-74)

Whether Rousseau meant for us to infer that Julie was here contemplating adultery is an unanswerable question. It is my personal interpretation that at this stage of her development she was considering not physical adultery, but an adultery of the heart, which was for her in itself a terrible surrender. It is necessary, nonetheless, to demonstrate that she is a woman capable of strong passions and exposed to great temptations, in order to make her subsequent victory over these passions

more meaningful.

Shortly before her marriage Julie writes Saint-Preux, from the depths of her misery, a most revealing comment: "Vous le savez, mon ami, ma santé, si robuste contre la fatigue et les injures de l'air, ne peut résister aux intempéries des passions, et c'est dans mon trop sensible coeur qu'est la source de tous les maux et de mon corps et de mon âme" (p. 288). Yet after the marriage there emerges a new Julie; she has definitely gone on to some higher plateau. She writes to Saint-Preux to tell him of the miracle that occurred at the very moment of marriage and has produced her subsequent contentment. Her letter reveals the miracle as a very sensual experience, beginning with all the external trappings of the marriage ceremony which attract both her eye and ear, and ending with a mental substitution of God himself for the physical presence of the minister.

For six years thereafter Julie lives the full life of the virtuous wife and mother. It is as though Rousseau had applied the eighteenth-century love of reason and Epicureanism to the spiritual life, with the hope of showing that it was not necessary to be a wild-eyed St. Joan to be an eighteenth-century saint. Even after Saint-Preux's return and continued presence as a

member of the household, the idealistic "équilibre" of good life, good works and family enjoyment (as well as that of husband, wife and friend) is maintained, though not without occasional difficulty. Saint-Preux's adjustment is seemingly more difficult than Julie's, but Rousseau is careful to show from time to time glimpses of a deeper emotional conflict within her than she admits even to herself. Finally M. de Wolmar decides to give them the final test or cure and leaves the couple alone. On a boat trip to Meillerie they are confronted with monuments of the past, places that remind them of their love when it was young. Nowhere are their frustrations and desires so well painted as in this passage, and though they remain true to their principles of virtue, their relationship, as far as Julie is concerned, can never be the same.

From this point forward, the signs of change within Julie become apparent. She becomes more pious and spends long hours in prayer. Saint-Preux writes of her: "On dirait que rien de terrestre ne pouvant suffire au besoin d'aimer dont elle est dévorée, cet excès de sensibilité soit forcé de remonter à sa source" (p. 503). One day she remarks that her function is not to raise her children but to prepare them to be raised (p. 492). Saint-Preux has a nightmare in which

Julie dies (p. 527). Later Julie sighs: "O mon ami! si la vie est courte pour le plaisir, qu'elle est longue pour la vertu!" (p. 573). And on a winter's night she writes:

. . . : mon imagination n'a plus rien à faire,
je n'ai rien à désirer; sentir et jouir sont
pour moi la même chose; je vis à la fois dans
tout ce que j'aime, je me rassasie de bonheur
et de vie. O mort! viens quand tu voudras, je
ne te crains plus, j'ai vécu, je t'ai prévenue;
je n'ai plus de nouveaux sentiments à connaître,
tu n'as plus rien à me dérober. (p. 594)

Surely it is not surprising that a bout of pneumonia or similar fever is able to carry off Julie in this state of mind.

The Garnier edition of La Nouvelle Héloïse contains 646 pages, most of which are concerned with how Julie lived life. The exact moment of her death is hardly described, perhaps because Julie herself made light of the specific action of drawing her last breath. Yet the process of dying occupies Rousseau from page 606, when Fanchon reports the near drowning of Marcellin, to page 635, when Wolmar finds Claire embracing Julie's corpse. This is the area of the novel which I will attempt to treat in some detail, along with the resurrection scene (pp. 637-38) and Julie's final letter to Saint-Preux (pp. 641-44). Obviously it will be impossible to examine sentence by sentence some thirty-four pages.

How does Rousseau go about the task of telling us how his heroine dies? As I have pointed out in the opening pages of this chapter, Rousseau incorporates this death into his entire novel. But finally he must tell of the event itself. He begins with Fanchon's letter written to Saint-Preux which tells in the faithful servant's vocabulary of the physical events that caused Julie's illness. This letter with its hesitations, broken sentences, switching of tenses and exclamation points conveys all the love, admiration, consternation and emotion which poor Fanchon feels. The next letter is just a few lines, begun by Claire, which tell Saint-Preux, again in broken, unfinished sentences, that Julie is dead. The third letter, and the significant one, is written by M. de Wolmar. The choice of Wolmar as the narrator of the climax of the novel is an important one. Rousseau has carefully constructed his character during the course of the book so that we can accept his particular ability to write such a letter. Wolmar is the philosophe of the eighteenth century, the man of reason and logic, disciplined and intelligent, and he has shown himself to be a keen observer of human behavior. At the same time he has a high code of ethics, loves Julie and his family more than he himself would admit, and is in the

logical position physically to observe all that goes on. Although it is hard to conceive of any man's writing in such detail of the death of his wife so soon after its occurrence, one has to admit that if anyone could have done so, it would have been M. de Wolmar. These facts established, Rousseau can easily take over the writing and organize the letter as he chooses. For artistic reasons he does have Wolmar falter from time to time, but for the most part the author and Wolmar fit together very nicely as one.

The letter itself is characterized, with certain intentional exceptions, by control and logic. Julie's last days are revealed in chronological order, in a series of scenes which involve conversations with first one character and then another. Some of these scenes appear to have a certain irrelevance to the whole. There seem to be three factors which hold together the recounting of Julie's death. The first has already been mentioned: the letter itself serves as a framework for so many diverse happenings. The second fact is that Julie takes to her bed and everything revolves about that bed; even meals are served in the sickroom, so that the entire drama, with all its dialogues and tableaux, takes place within one setting. The third unifying factor would seem to me to be the

great effort that Rousseau is making to show that Julie is a saint. Her death as well as her life must be a demonstratio. The first two unifying elements hardly need proof, but the third, though admittedly debatable, will at least furnish a point of departure for examining many details in the passage at hand.

Let us begin by considering the matter of actual physical proportions devoted to various aspects of death, assuming that the area which receives the most attention is the one the author wishes to emphasize. How many pages does Rousseau devote to a realistic description of the dying woman? There are no pages; there are not even any long paragraphs. The most graphic sentence on the subject is found on page 610 and only half of it is concerned with the physical: "Étouffement, oppression, syncope, la peau sèche et brûlante; une ardente fièvre, durant laquelle on l'entendait souvent appeler vivement Marcellin comme pour le retenir, et prononcer aussi quelquefois un autre nom, jadis si répété dans une occasion pareille." There are three sentences on page 612 which convey the general idea that she is more feeble and was unable to sleep the preceding night. Then on the following page: "Pour Julie, elle paraissait moins faible que la veille; sa voix était plus ferme, son geste plus animé; elle semblait avoir pris la

vivacité de sa cousine." Contemplation of what will be her father's reaction when he learns of her approaching death brings on these two sentences: "Ce moment fut un de ceux où l'horreur de la mort se faisait sentir, et où la nature reprenait son empire. Elle soupira, joignit les mains, leva les yeux; et je vis qu'en effet elle employait cette difficile prière qu'elle avait dit être celle du malade" (p. 623). Later on the same page there is a short paragraph:

Ce jour fut pour elle un jour de fatigue. La préparation de Madame d'Orbe durant la nuit, la scène des enfants le matin, celle du ministre l'après-midi, l'entretien du soir avec moi, l'avaient jetée dans l'épuisement. Elle eut un peu plus de repos cette nuit-là que les précédentes, soit à cause de sa faiblesse, soit qu'en effet la fièvre et le redoublement fussent moindres.

On the following page there is a physical interruption to the audience with Claude Anet, the returning prodigal servant: "Mais tandis que Julie le consolait et lui donnait de bonnes espérances, elle fut saisie d'un violent étouffement, et se trouva si mal qu'on crut qu'elle allait expirer." This sort of seizure is repeated on page 632: "Vers le soir elle eut encore un accident qui, bien que moindre que celui du matin, ne lui permit pas de voir longtemps ses enfants." But two sentences later she is ready to carry on again: "Se sentant bien revenue, elle voulut qu'on soupât dans sa

chambre." This is the night of the Last Supper, during which she drinks a little wine and gives a false impression of being better: "Ce qu'il y avait d'étonnant, c'est que son teint n'était point allumé; ses yeux ne brillaient que d'un feu modéré par la langueur de la maladie; à la pâleur près, on l'aurait crue en santé" (p. 633). On the following page the doctor takes her pulse, looks at her eyes and tongue, and reports that she does seem to be better. These sentences, as gathered into a group here, complete the entire attention to realistic description. All told they would up one page of the thirty-four involved with the death of Julie.

How much space does Rousseau consign to physical description of the scene, the bedroom which is the background for all the action? One paragraph (p. 613) is devoted to the appearance of the room and the appearance of Julie. Even then there are only three specific details:

. . . ; elle avait fait mettre des pots de fleurs sur sa cheminée, ses rideaux étaient entr'ouverts et rattachés; l'air avait été changé; on y sentait une odeur agréable; on n'eût jamais cru être dans la chambre d'un malade.

What is more important than the exact description of the room or of Julie herself is the evocation of the mood

which she has created, which Rousseau sums up in a comparison: "Tout lui donnait plutôt l'air d'une femme du monde qui attend compagnie, que d'une campagnarde qui attend sa dernière heure."

To what then does Rousseau devote the remainder of the letter? It appears to me that all that is left is used for the sole purpose of showing Julie's exceptional goodness. This is done for the most part by a direct recounting of her words which express her moral views on many subjects; by direct or indirect referral to her acts--the saving of her son, the forgiving of the prodigal servant, the intense interest in the welfare of her family, both during her remaining life on earth and after; and by the effect of her personality and example on the other characters involved in the drama of her death. Of these three areas, the first is by far the dominant one, some ten pages being devoted to religious questions alone.

Let us consider first, however, the simplest of these three methods of showing Julie's goodness, her acts in behalf of others. She saves her son from drowning, but further than that she insists several times that he be assured that he must never feel responsible for her death. Her first thoughts on falling ill concern the education of the children she

will leave. Throughout the days of her illness she displays much physical tenderness toward them and finally gives them to Claire as their second mother. She works hard at making death beautiful and natural so that everyone's memories of her will be good ones. Each person in his turn gets her individual concern-- here a paragraph for Claire, here one for her father, until each is assured of her immediate attention and is also provided for in the future.

Julie's final letter to Saint-Preux, who is necessarily absent during the death scene (for there must be an excuse to write a letter to him) is, among other things, an attempt to give him solace and to arrange for the rest of the days of all those who are dear to her. The episode of the return of Fanchon's errant husband, Claude Anet, is somewhat hard to account for, artistically speaking. Perhaps it is inserted for the purpose of extending Julie's concern for human beings beyond the scope of her family. M. de Wolmar lets Anet in only because of Julie's previous attitude: "Comme elle avait établi pour règle inviolable de ne jamais rebuter personne, et surtout les malheureux, on me parla de cet homme avant de le renvoyer" (p. 623). When she does see him, it is not to forgive him but to scold Wolmar for allowing Anet to remain in such awful

apparel, to console him, and to give him hope.

From the effect of Julie on the various characters about her we learn how deep is their personal devotion to her and, at the same time, something of the trauma and emotion which surround her dying is conveyed to us. We have already seen how Fanchon's emotion is made evident by the style in which she writes: "Tout le monde est dans une agitation . . . Je suis la plus tranquille de toute la maison . . . De quoi m'inquiéteraï-je? . . . Ma bonne maîtresse! ah! si je vous perds, je n'aurai plus besoin de personne . . . " (p. 607).

Fanchon's so-called tranquility provides a bit of humor, a rare commodity in this novel, for on the next page Wolmar remarks: "Claire tenait une des mains de sa cousine, et la pressait à chaque instant contre sa bouche, en sanglotant pour toute réponse; la Fanchon n'était pas plus tranquille; . . . " On the following page Wolmar is still having trouble calming Fanchon: "La Fanchon seule fut témoin de ce discours; et après l'avoir engagée, non sans peine, à se contenir, on convint de ce qui serait dit à madame d'Orbe et au reste de la maison." Later, even immediately after the return of her long-lost husband, Fanchon refuses to leave her mistress. Her devotion, incidentally, is rewarded in that she is invited to eat at the table

with the family at both the meals conducted in the sick room.

The general emotional state of all the servants in the household is touched upon several times, testifying to the love they hold for their mistress. Notable among these occasions is the one when, believing Julie to be improving, they all contribute three months' wages to buy the doctor a present. On the night of Julie's death they are so excited by their hopes that Wolmar is unable to make them go to bed "ni par ordres ni par menaces" (p. 634). And again there is the individual response of the old servant of Julie's father, who approaches her in death saying:

Ah! ma bonne maîtresse! ah! que Dieu ne m'a-t-il pris au lieu de vous! Moi qui suis vieux, qui ne tiens à rien, qui ne suis bon à rien, que fais-je sur la terre? Et vous qui étiez jeune, qui faisiez la gloire de votre famille, le bonheur de votre maison, l'espoir des malheureux . . . hélas! (p. 637)

Claire, whose character has been portrayed as similar to Julie's, but more lighthearted and talkative, becomes very different in these final scenes. She says almost nothing, but goes about her task of caring for Julie with quiet intensity. Wolmar describes her the night after Julie has broken the news to her that she is dying: "En entrant, je la vis assise dans un fauteuil, défaite et pâle, ou plutôt livide, les yeux

plombés et presque éteints, mais douce, tranquille, parlant peu, faisant tout ce qu'on lui disait sans répondre" (p. 613). During Julie's conversations with the minister, Wolmar, the doctor, and Fanchon, Claire is much the same: "Attentive aux besoins de son amie, elle était prompte à la servir. Le reste du temps, immobile et presque inanimée, elle la regardait sans rien dire, et sans rien entendre de ce qu'on disait" (p. 621). Her interest in the return of Claude Anet is faint and passing, for "un seul sentiment absorbait tout; elle n'était plus sensible à rien" (p. 624). When Julie speaks at length of the importance of their friendship from cradle to grave, "Claire, pour toute réponse, baissa la tête sur le sein de son amie, et voulut soulager ses sanglots par des pleurs: il ne fut pas possible" (p. 626). Her restrained emotions break bounds when the doctor gives a certain amount of false hope the night before Julie's death:

A ce moment Claire part comme un éclair, renverse deux chaises et presque la table, saute au cou du médecin, l'embrasse, le baise mille fois en sanglotant et pleurant à chaudes larmes, et toujours avec la même impétuosité, s'ôte du doigt une bague de prix, la met au sien malgré lui, et lui dit hors d'haleine: Ah! monsieur, si vous nous la rendez, vous ne la sauverez pas seule! (p. 634)

This emotional outburst helps explain the hysterical behavior which she will demonstrate after Julie's death.

Both extremes of her reaction are, however, indicative of the depth of her feelings for Julie.

The most important personality during the death scene, other than the heroine, is Wolmar himself. With this particular character, Rousseau has done a very subtle and artistic job of letting him reveal himself and the effect that Julie has on him as she dies. Except for the minister, all the others are ignorant or over-emotional or immature, but Wolmar is the epitome of the intellectual, so that Julie's victory over him is a victory indeed.

Although Wolmar constantly claims to be unable to share in ordinary human emotions, it is clear that in everything concerning Julie he feels as strongly as anyone. What he really lacks is an ability to permit himself to show any outward manifestations of his feelings. He is, on the other hand, extremely selfless and unusually perceptive of the emotions of all others, particularly those of his wife. He begins his letter to Saint-Preux, not by saying that he has been unable to write because of his own grief, but because he has not wanted to disturb the grief of the latter. His reason for writing is beautiful and lyric: "Il ne me reste d'elle que des souvenirs; mon coeur se plaît à les recueillir" (p. 607).

Rousseau employs several techniques to show the great strength of Wolmar, one of the most interesting of which comes in small, insignificant details which he himself reveals. . In the midst of all the emotional chaos of the household, it is Wolmar who keeps things under control. It is he who calms Fanchon and Claire on many occasions. It is he who realizes that Claire is frightened by the servants hanging around the sickroom door: "Il fallut les éloigner sous différents prétextes, pour écarter de ses yeux cet objet d'effroi" (p. 609). And with Claude Anet hidden in the adjoining closet, it is Wolmar who spurs Fanchon on to speak with affection of her long-lost husband, thus precipitating their reconciliation. Then when Fanchon needs an excuse to leave her mistress so that she can visit with her husband: "Pour lui faire donner quelques heures à son mari, on prétexta que les enfants avaient besoin de prendre l'air, et tous deux furent chargés de les conduire" (p. 625). When Julie gives her children to Claire he comments: "Cette scène commençait à devenir trop vive; je la fis cesser" (p. 615). These various details reveal Wolmar's common sense and wisdom, thus making his account of more important events, concerning Julie, entirely reliable and believable. Wolmar is also in charge of more serious matters, such as

determining when Julie has had too much excitement, summoning the doctor, arranging the funeral, telling the father, etc. The heaviest burden he carries is the one of knowing before anyone else that Julie cannot live. Rousseau describes the human emotions involved in this experience and the following one, in which he must tell Julie that she is dying, in such terms that he gives the impression of having, at some time in his life, undergone them himself.

It becomes unnecessary to tell Julie, in words, what is the doctor's prognostication: "Je ne dis rien; mais elle me vit et me comprit à l'instant" (p. 611). This is but one instance of the depth of communication which exists between Julie and her husband of six years. There are many others and this strong familiarity and understanding gives weight to the series of statements which I will quote below. All these statements make Julie's life and death something different from that of other mortals. At the very beginning of his letter, as an introduction to all the details which will follow, Wolmar says:

Ce n'est point de sa maladie, c'est d'elle que je veux vous parler. D'autres mères peuvent se jeter après leur enfant; l'accident, la fièvre, la mort, sont de la nature, c'est le sort commun des mortels: mais l'emploi de ses derniers moments, ses discours, ses sentiments, son âme, tout cela

n'appartient qu'à Julie. Elle n'a point vécu
comme une autre; personne, que je sache n'est
mort comme elle. (pp. 607-08)

On the occasion of Wolmar's telling Julie that she is
dying, he says: "Je n'employai point auprès d'elle
les précautions nécessaires pour les petites âmes"
(p. 611). After Julie's long speech on her religion,
M. de Wolmar reports, again with lyricism, both his
reaction and that of the minister:

Ce discours, prononcé d'un ton grave et posé,
puis avec plus d'accent et d'une voix plus élevée,
fit sur tous les assistants, sans m'en excepter,
une impression d'autant plus vive, que les yeux
de celle qui le prononça brillaient d'un feu
surnaturel; un nouvel éclat animait son teint,
elle paraissait rayonnante; et s'il y a quelque
chose au monde qui mérite le nom de céleste,
c'était son visage tandis qu'elle parlait.

Le pasteur lui-même, saisi, transporté
de ce qu'il venait d'entendre, s'écria en
levant les mains et les yeux au ciel: Grand
Dieu, voilà le culte qui t'honore; daigne t'y
rendre propice; les humains t'en offrent peu de
pareils. (p. 619)

The minister goes even further:

Madame, votre mort est aussi belle que votre vie:
vous avez vécu pour la charité; vous mourez martyr
de l'amour maternel. Soit que Dieu vous rende à
nous pour nous servir d'exemple, soit qu'il vous
appelle à lui pour couronner vos vertus, puissions-
nous tous tant que nous sommes vivre et mourir
comme vous! nous serons bien sûrs du bonheur de
l'autre vie. (p. 619)

Surely at this point Rousseau is making a definite
effort to establish the contemporary sainthood of
Julie Wolmar.

Before we abandon M. de Wolmar to consider Julie herself, we should point out the effect she has on his professed atheism. Earlier in the novel Julie has, in a somewhat veiled manner, predicted that she may some day intercede for his salvation: "Puisse-je l'acheter aux dépens de ma vie! mon dernier jour serait le mieux employé" (p. 509). Then, as Wolmar debates whether to tell Julie that she is dying, he puts into his own logical words both his atheistic opinions and her faith:

Je n'ai pour croire ce que je crois que mon opinion armée de quelques probabilités. Nulle démonstration ne la renverse, il est vrai; mais quelle démonstration l'établit? Elle a, pour croire ce qu'elle croit, son opinion de même, mais elle y voit l'évidence; cette opinion à ses yeux est une démonstration. Quel droit ai-je de préférer, quand il s'agit d'elle, ma simple opinion que je reconnais douteuse, à son opinion qu'elle tient pour démontrée? . . . Mais si peut-être elle avait raison, quelle différence! Des biens ou des maux éternels! . . . Peut-être! ce mot est terrible! . . . Malheureux! risque ton âme et non la sienne.

Voilà le premier doute qui m'ait rendu suspecte l'incertitude que vous avez si souvent attaquée. (p. 611)

Some pages later, when Julie applies reason to her faith, Wolmar sees himself attracted in the only way that he can be approached: "Je m'aperçus aussi que je commençais à donner un peu plus d'attention aux articles de la religion de Julie où la foi se rapprochait de la

raison" (p. 630).

We have now approached our heroine, Julie, from many angles but we have not looked at her directly, and this, after all, is the method Rousseau uses more than any other. Essentially he tells us how she arranges her last days on earth in a most unusual and joyful manner, and through her long discourses on the subject we learn why she is able to approach death with such "joie." Julie's interpretation of religion is synonymous with that of Rousseau. It is characterized by simplicity, naturalness, common sense, and an unquestioning belief in God, coupled with a disdain for dogma, especially Catholic. But Julie de Wolmar is a living woman, subject to human passions and delight in innocent pleasures, so that she not only professes her faith in long conversations, but she lives it and dies it. Thus Rousseau has translated his beliefs into a philosophical drama with psychological overtones.

To understand her actions, it will perhaps be helpful to examine in some detail her long discourse on religion. It begins with the arrival of the minister, who is, significantly, not summoned but comes "comme ami de maison" (p. 615). The drama of Julie's long speech is emphasized by the questions which Wolmar has been entertaining privately about her faith--why is she,

who has always been so pious, so unconcerned with religious matters now that death is near? The minister prods her to such a discussion by his reprimand:

Il ajouta qu'à la vérité il lui avait quelquefois trouvé sur certains points des sentiments qui ne s'accordaient pas entièrement avec la doctrine de l'Eglise. . . . il espérait qu'elle voulait mourir ainsi qu'elle avait vécu, dans la communion des fidèles, et acquiescer en tout à la commune profession de foi. (pp. 616-17)

Julie's two and one-half page reply is divided into six logically developed paragraphs. Always solicitous of others, she begins in a conversational manner by thanking the minister for his spiritual aid, and especially for his tolerance and gentleness. The second paragraph is one in which she maintains that whatever her faults may have been, and she is modest and humble concerning their probability, she has never been hypocritical about her beliefs. She repeats the word "toujours" six times in the course of the paragraph to emphasize the consistency of this quality. Her relationship with God is friendly and trusting as she asks with feminine logic: "Si Dieu n'a pas éclairé ma raison au delà, il est clément et juste; pourrait-il me demander compte d'un don qu'il ne m'a pas fait?" In each of the ensuing paragraphs the final sentence is similar in spirit to this one: each is a statement of tranquil confidence, and there is a definite progress

from one to the next.

The third paragraph concerns the utter ridiculousness of last-minute changes in one's beliefs:

Distraite par le mal, livrée au délire de la fièvre, est-il temps d'essayer de raisonner mieux que je n'ai fait, jouissant d'un entendement aussi sain que je l'ai reçu? Si je me suis trompée alors, me trompérais-je moins aujourd'hui? et dans l'abattement où je suis, dépend-il de moi de croire autre chose que ce que j'ai cru étant en santé? (p. 617)

In Julie's particular case, her sound reasoning at death's door discredits her theory, which is certainly to be characterized as a common-sense one.

The general content of the first half of the fourth paragraph is an amplification of the lead sentence: "Quant à la préparation à la mort, monsieur, elle est faite; mal, il est vrai, mais de mon mieux, et mieux du moins que je ne la pourrais faire à présent" (p. 618). Her contention is that she has made all her preparations while in good health and that she would hesitate to offer herself to God in her present wasted state. From this statement she progresses logically to the justification for filling the remaining moments of life with attentions to her family:

Non, monsieur, il me les laisse [ces restes d'une vie à demi éteinte] pour être donnés à ceux qu'il m'a fait aimer et qu'il veut que je quitte; je leur fais mes adieux pour aller à lui; c'est d'eux qu'il faut que je m'occupe: bientôt je m'occuperai de lui seul.

Nevertheless, thoughts of an early meeting with her Lord do bring her mind to focus more on this immediate confrontation than has been the case earlier in the passage. The remainder of the paragraph consists of a renewed expression of confidence in the outcome of facing God, both because of His essential goodness and her own clarity of conscience:

Ma conscience n'est point agitée: si quelquefois elle m'a donné des craintes, j'en avais plus en santé qu'aujourd'hui. Ma confiance les efface; elle me dit que Dieu est plus clément que je ne suis coupable, et ma sécurité redouble en me sentant approcher de lui.

After two negative sentences which are a condemnation of last-minute repenting, "dicté par la peur," Julie states how differently she herself will meet God: "Je lui porte ma vie entière, pleine de péchés et de fautes, mais exempte des remords de l'impie et des crimes du méchant."

In the final paragraph, continued thoughts of the imminence of His judgment cause Julie to cease addressing her words to the minister and to speak instead directly to God, the whole passage becoming ever more sublime:

O grand Être! Être éternel, suprême intelligence, source de vie et de félicité, créateur, conservateur, père de l'homme et roi de la nature, Dieu très puissant, très bon, dont je ne doutai jamais un moment, et sous les yeux duquel j'aimai toujours à vivre! je le sais, je m'en réjouis, je vais paraître devant ton trône.

Her words of praise describe a God who is all good, and mark the spiritual climax of her long speech. She then returns to what remains of herself: "Mon corps vit encore, mais ma vie morale est finie." And she ends her two and one-half page uninterrupted discourse with the final confidence, as simple and trusting as that of a child: "Qui s'endort dans le sein d'un père n'est pas en souci du réveil."

Armed with the insight provided by the foregoing defense of her religious beliefs, we are more able to understand the manner in which Julie lives out her last days. For this remarkable woman takes charge of her death and runs the show, so to speak, instead of giving herself up passively to the hideous process of dying. Almost from the beginning she emphasizes all that is life rather than that which is death. For example, this tendency is revealed in her requests to the doctor during his first visit:

Prescrivez-moi tout ce que vous jugerez m'être véritablement utile, j'obéirai ponctuellement. Quant aux remèdes qui ne sont que pour l'imagination, faites-m'en grâce; c'est mon corps et non mon esprit qui souffre; et je n'ai pas peur de finir mes jours, mais d'en mal employer le reste. Les derniers moments de la vie sont trop précieux pour qu'il soit permis d'en abuser. Si vous ne pouvez prolonger la mienne, au moins ne l'abrégez pas en m'ôtant l'emploi du peu d'instant qui me sont laissés par la nature. (p. 610)

After the ordeal of telling Claire that she is dying, Julie seems to throw herself wholeheartedly into living out her theories. The scene describing the bedroom has been discussed earlier, but it is perhaps worth noting here that all that Julie does to her room reflects an effort to replace death and ugliness with life and beauty: she changes stale air for fresh, she has living flowers brought in, and she takes special pains with her toilet. Later, just after the long discourse with the minister, Julie explains in conversational manner what she had conveyed earlier in more lofty terms:

La mort, disait-elle, est déjà si pénible! pourquoi la rendre encore hideuse? Les soins que les autres perdent à vouloir prolonger leur vie, je les emploie à jouir de la mienne jusqu'au bout: il ne s'agit que de savoir prendre son parti; tout le reste va de lui-même. Ferai-je de ma chambre un hôpital, un objet de dégoût et d'ennui, tandis que mon dernier soin est d'y rassembler tout ce qui m'est cher? Si j'y laisse croupir le mauvais air, il faudra en écarter mes enfants, ou exposer leur santé. Si je reste dans un équipage à faire peur, personne ne me reconnaîtra plus; je ne serai plus la même; vous vous souviendrez tous de m'avoir aimée, et ne pourrez plus me souffrir; j'aurai, moi vivante, l'affreux spectacle de l'horreur que je ferai, même à mes amis, comme si j'étais déjà morte. Au lieu de cela, j'ai trouvé l'art d'étendre ma vie sans la prolonger. J'existe, j'aime, je suis aimée, je vis jusqu'à mon dernier soupir. (pp. 620-21)

I have quoted this rather long passage because I believe it reveals the Julie that one remembers long

after reading this novel, better than any other. We do not recall all her words on virtue, treatment of servants, religion, etc., but we remember that she did indeed make an art of dying. Although this is perhaps an ideal impossible of actual achievement in real life, Rousseau has at least made it seem plausible in Julie's case because of all we know of her religious theories.

M. de Wolmar reports in his letter that Julie actually carried out her intentions: "Julie était, comme en pleine santé, douce et caressante; elle parlait avec le même sens, avec la même liberté d'esprit, même d'un air serein qui allait jusqu'à la gaieté: . . . " (p. 621). He also tells of numerous scenes and conversations with various other characters, two of which we will consider briefly. The first begins "Elle nous proposa de dîner dans sa chambre, pour nous quitter le moins qu'il se pourrait: vous pouvez croire que cela ne fut pas refusé" (p. 615). This sentence simultaneously reveals Julie's effort to provide a pleasant occasion in a normal setting and her unwillingness to hide the inevitability of the fact of impending death. The dinner is no haphazard affair but is characterized by order and perhaps even formality, although the children and Fanchon are present. It is noteworthy that Rousseau, in one long sentence, seizes

upon a general action, the manner in which Julie coaxes her family to eat, and through a series of carefully chosen present participles, gives specific details which support the comparison and general statement of the sentence which follows it:

Julie, voyant qu'on manquait d'appétit, trouva le secret de faire manger de tout, tantôt prétextant l'instruction de sa cuisinière, tantôt voulant savoir si elle oserait en goûter, tantôt nous intéressant par notre santé même dont nous avons besoin pour la servir, toujours montrant le plaisir qu'on pouvait lui faire, de manière à ôter tout moyen de s'y refuser, et mêlant à tout cela un enjouement propre à nous distraire du triste objet qui nous occupait. Enfin, une maîtresse de maison, attentive à faire ses honneurs, n'aurait pas, en pleine santé, pour des étrangers, des soins plus marqués, plus obligeants, plus aimables, que ceux que Julie mourante avait, pour sa famille. (p. 615)

Of the second scene, M. de Wolmar says: "Nous passâmes l'après-midi, Claire et moi, seuls auprès d'elle; et nous eûmes deux heures d'un entretien paisible, qu'elle rendit le plus intéressant, le plus charmant que nous eussions jamais eu" (p. 625).

During this conversation, Julie gives a three-page recapitulation of her life. Whereas the long discourse with the minister was reported by Wolmar in direct quotation, this conversation is handled differently. Some of it her husband summarizes for her; some seems to be indirect quotation and some is direct; but it is monopolized by Julie who espouses in it Rousseau's

theory of Providence. This complete view of Julie's life also gives weight to my theory that Rousseau is perhaps trying to show that Julie has led a saint's life, according to his standards. The first paragraph pays tribute to heredity and environment. She gives thanks for having been given gifts which clearly fall into heart, mind, and body categories: "Elle remercia le ciel de lui avoir donné un coeur sensible et porté au bien, un entendement sain, une figure prévenante; . . . " She goes on to convey the impression that only a certain country, a certain family, certain parents, and the Protestant religion, "raisonnable et sainte," could have produced the woman that she is. The next paragraph is devoted to the joys of friendship with Claire, while the third and fourth refer to her experiences with Saint-Preux. She even makes an oblique reference to the "erreurs de ma passion." Even these mistakes, however, served a good purpose: "Il [Saint-Preux] s'offrit; je crus le choisir; sans doute le ciel le choisit pour moi, afin que, livrée aux erreurs de ma passion, je ne le fusse pas aux horreurs du crime, et que l'amour de la vertu restât au moins dans mon âme après elles." In reporting her praises of Saint-Preux, Wolmar reveals a bit of jealousy and something of Julie's lack of objectivity concerning her former

lover:

Elle s'étendit avec complaisance sur le mérite de cet amant; elle lui rendait justice, mais on voyait combien son coeur se plaisait à la lui rendre. Elle le louait même à ses propres dépens. A force d'être équitable envers lui, elle était inique envers elle, et se faisait tort pour lui faire honneur.

The fifth and sixth paragraphs deal with the role of Providence both in her life and in her seemingly premature death. Wolmar tells us that she listed the various tragedies of her life and justified them: "Il n'y avait pas jusqu'à ses chagrins et ses peines qu'elle ne comptât pour des avantages, en ce qu'ils avaient empêché son coeur de s'endurcir aux malheurs d'autrui." The first and last sentences of the long sixth paragraph begin and end with references to happiness:

Voyez donc, continuait-elle, à quelle félicité je suis parvenue. J'en avais beaucoup; j'en attendais davantage. . . . Je fus heureuse, je le suis, je vais l'être: mon bonheur est fixé, je l'arrache à la fortune; il n'a plus de bornes que l'éternité.

In between, Julie explains all the misfortunes that an early death has spared her: loss of parent, separation from children, old age, etc., continuing "Au lieu de cela, mes derniers instants sont encore agréables et j'ai de la vigueur pour mourir; si même on peut appeler mourir que laisser vivant ce qu'on aime." Her

faith that everything happens for the best extends to her family, as she hints that in dying first she will intercede for them and even "le bon Wolmar lui-même n'échappera pas. Mon retour à Dieu tranquillise mon âme et m'adoucit un moment pénible; il me promet pour vous le même destin qu'à moi." Thus we have still another "entretien," begun on a purely conversational level, which has finished on an exalted plane, in this case ending with the word "éternité."

There is very little to consider in the actual death scene of Julie, for as she herself had said: "L'instant de la mort n'est rien; . . . " (p. 621). Wolmar describes her on that final day: "Otez cet effroi qui ne permet pas de jouir de ce qu'on va perdre, elle plaisait plus, elle était plus aimable qu'en santé même, et le dernier jour de sa vie en fut aussi le plus charmant" (p. 631). During the evening a family dinner is again arranged (the Last Supper) and the wine seemingly causes a temporary improvement in Julie's condition. The inclusion of the incident of the false hope is somewhat difficult to explain, except that it perhaps adds to the drama and pathos of the approaching death. It also inflicts on Julie, who is not fooled for a moment, one last painful experience and enables her to utter her last tragic words, similar

to those of Jesus on the cross, but spoken in the accent of Rousseau: "On m'a fait boire jusqu'à la lie la coupe amère et douce de la sensibilité" (p. 634).

Wolmar begins the death paragraph with calmness, revealing by the fact that he heard all the comings and goings during the night and by the statement, "un bruit sourd frappa mon oreille" (p. 635), that he did not sleep himself. But recounting the awful moments causes even Wolmar to become emotional; he switches to the present tense, giving the short broken sentences an extra poignancy and he calls out, from a continuing despair:

J'écoute, je crois distinguer des gémissements.
J'accours, j'entre, j'ouvre le rideau... Saint-
Preux!... cher Saint-Preux!... je vois les
deux amies sans mouvement et se tenant embrassées,
l'une évanouie et l'autre expirante. Je m'écrie,
je veux retarder ou recueillir son dernier
soupir, je me précipite. (p. 635)

The series of short, first-person present verbs evokes all the drama of poor Wolmar who first hears with his ears the alarming sounds, runs to the bed and on throwing back the covers sees with his eyes the pitiful tableau. As usual, Claire is a close imitation of Julie, both being described in parallel fashion, embracing and motionless, but for different physical reasons. The stoical Wolmar has then a highly emotional reaction as he cries out, throws himself upon the

women, and is unable to remember anything for a few moments. His words, "je veux retarder ou recueillir son dernier soupir," are quite lyric. The paragraph ends, however, with the simple quiet statement: "Elle n'était plus."

The false resurrection of Julie serves to carry out the analogy of her death to that of Jesus Christ. Rousseau devotes two pages to this episode, writing apparently from the viewpoint of the eighteenth-century philosophe. An old family servant, while literally worshipping at the bedside of the corpse, refers to Julie as "l'espoir des malheureux," then imagines that he sees her move. He tells the others and the word quickly spreads among the eager-to-believe servants, though Wolmar, of course, is not taken in. In describing the way in which the rumor grows, Rousseau seems not to be comparing Julie's resurrection to Christ's, but to be showing, by the example of Julie, how the rumor about Christ, also a greatly loved and good person, might easily have begun the same way:

. . . : Elle n'est pas morte! Le bruit s'en répand et s'augmente: le peuple, ami du merveilleux, se prête avidement à la nouvelle; on la croit comme on la désire; chacun cherche à se faire fête en appuyant la crédulité commune. Bientôt la défunte n'avait pas seulement fait signe, elle avait agi, elle avait parlé, et il y avait vingt témoins oculaires de faits circonstanciés qui n'arrivèrent jamais. (p. 637)

When Wolmar becomes aware of all this, he significantly uses the word "multitude" in referring to the servants: "Je reconnus bientôt qu'il était impossible de faire entendre raison à la multitude; . . . " The conclusion of the whole episode comes about for the most realistic of reasons: "Cependant, après plus de trente-six heures, par l'extrême chaleur qu'il faisait, les chairs commençaient à se corrompre; et quoique le visage eût gardé ses traits et sa douceur, on y voyait déjà quelques signes d'altération" (p. 638). Whether Rousseau is actually casting doubt on the Biblical story or whether he is continuing his attempt to bestow a rationally arrived at sainthood on Julie is, of course, open to question but is not the subject of this particular study.

For thirty-four pages M. de Wolmar has told Saint-Preux all the details of Julie's dying days. For all the reasons gone into in this chapter, the good husband has convinced us that the ideal woman, possessing every virtue, has just left this earth. We have heard at length from Julie, both in direct quotation and in Wolmar's summary of her words, but it has been a long time since we have heard from Julie herself. The device of Julie's letter, written to Saint-Preux and enclosed with Wolmar's long epistle,

provides Rousseau with the dramatic end for his novel as the real Julie speaks out from beyond the tomb.

The letter begins with abruptness and urgency:

"Il faut renoncer à nos projets. Tout est changé, mon bon ami: souffrons ce changement sans murmure; il vient d'une main plus sage que nous" (p. 641).

The change in plans and the need for acceptance all come out in one sentence, together with a plea to consider that even this misfortune is for the best. In the next dramatic paragraphs, Julie begins her confession by discussing the illusion under which she and Saint-Preux had lived, the illusion that she was cured of her love for him. She then describes the invincibility of the feeling which she is finally willing to acknowledge. All the verbs contribute to the impression of its strength and power:

Oui, j'eus beau vouloir étouffer le premier sentiment qui m'a fait vivre, il s'est concentré dans mon coeur. Il s'y réveille au moment qu'il n'est plus à craindre; il me soutient quand mes forces m'abandonnent; il me ranime quand je me meurs. (p. 641)

Julie attributes to this love sustaining powers that she might have been expected to receive instead from her religion. The word "étouffer" half suggests the metaphor of the spark, lying dormant in the heart, concentrating its strength, bursting forth once it is

stirred. But Julie feels no shame for this admission because she considers this passion to be beyond her personal control, outside the jurisdiction of her will:

Mon ami, je fais cet aveu sans honte; ce sentiment resté malgré moi fut involontaire; il n'a rien coûté à mon innocence; tout ce qui dépend de ma volonté fut pour mon devoir: si le coeur qui n'en dépend pas fut pour vous, ce fut mon tourment et non pas mon crime. (pp. 641-42)

Thus for the moment, Julie becomes a classical heroine: she sees herself lucidly and she considers herself the victim of a passion beyond her control. The new idea is that this passion comes not from fate but from the heart, and it brings no feeling of guilt.

In the next paragraph Julie goes beyond admitting her secret love by indicating in a beautiful little sentence that her virtue was indeed in great danger: "Un jour de plus peut-être et j'étais coupable!" The first part of the paragraph is filled with words like dangers, fears, and trials, until she finally writes in sheer exhaustion: "N'ai-je pas assez vécu pour le bonheur et pour la vertu?" The remainder of the paragraph helps complete the psychological picture of Julie dying as it reveals additional reasons for her unusual attitude toward that experience:

Que me restait-il d'utile à tirer de la vie?
En me l'ôtant, le ciel ne m'ôte plus rien de
regrettable, et met mon honneur à couvert.

Mon ami, je pars au moment favorable, contente de vous et de moi; je pars avec joie, et ce départ n'a rien de cruel. Après tant de sacrifices, je compte pour peu celui qui me reste à faire: ce n'est que mourir une fois de plus. (p. 642)

Quite abruptly Julie turns her thoughts to the misery of Saint-Preux. She seems to anticipate that he will feel suicidal, so she coaxes him: "Que de soins à remplir envers celle qui vous fut chère vous font un devoir de vous conserver pour elle!" She consoles him, and herself, too, undoubtedly, that part of her will remain with those left behind. She urges them to seek her in each other. This idea she pushes even further by advising Saint-Preux to marry Claire: "Non, Claire et Julie seront si bien confondues, qu'il ne sera plus possible à votre coeur de les séparer" (p. 643). Julie goes on to outline Saint-Preux's duties toward Wolmar, which will be to finish the job of conversion which she has begun: "Soyez chrétien pour l'engager à l'être. Le succès est plus près que vous ne pensez: il a fait son devoir, je ferai le mien, faites le vôtre. Dieu est juste: ma confiance ne me trompera pas." Here again is the hint that she will intercede in heaven in behalf of Wolmar, and also the confidence with which she always terminates any religious thought.

In giving Saint-Preux instructions about her children she becomes less lofty and more humanly sentimental. Finally, drained by emotion and illness, she begins to bring the letter to an end: "Je me sens fatiguée. Il faut finir cette lettre."

Now there is nothing left to say but goodbye. Rousseau has written a beautiful adieu for Julie--tender, intimate, pathetic, yet not without hope. Julie herself realizes that she stands stripped of all pretense "en ce moment où le coeur ne déguise plus rien" She also remarks on the fact that her first letter was also one in which she spoke perhaps too freely (drawing attention, incidentally, to Rousseau's composition): "Hélas! j'achève de vivre comme j'ai commencé." The effect of long restraint makes the sudden use of the familiar form and the "mon doux ami" most moving. About midway in the paragraph she brings up the fact that she is speaking from beyond the tomb: "Ce n'est plus moi qui te parle; je suis déjà dans les bras de la mort." To emphasize this point she speaks of worms already gnawing at her face and heart, presumably to make it seem that the tender words which follow must necessarily, then, come from the soul. The mixture of ecclesiastical words and sensual love, as Julie speaks of a reunion

in the hereafter, is superb:

Non, je ne te quitte pas, je vais t'attendre.
 La vertu qui nous sépara sur la terre nous unira
 dans le séjour éternel. Je meurs dans cette
 douce attente: trop heureuse d'acheter au
 prix de ma vie le droit de t'aimer toujours
 sans crime, et de te le dire encore une
 fois! (p. 644)

These words of love are given their musical quality by the gentle cadences and by the numerous repetitions of the consonants "t" (fifteen), "r" (fifteen), and "d" (eight). The rhythm of the sentences is often balanced for a further poetic effect. In particular, the second sentence might be described 11/11. Thus Rousseau's tendency toward poetic prose, rare in the death scene up to this point, but manifested with some frequency throughout the novel, is quite apparent in the conclusion of Julie's farewell to Saint-Preux. This is perhaps another indication of Rousseau's effort to write as Wolmar would have written.

If no other impression has been conveyed by the foregoing study, it should at least have succeeded in making clear the fact that Rousseau's handling of the death of Julie de Wolmar is no casual affair. He has put all his literary talents to work to give this event the power and importance which it certainly attains. The manner of Julie's dying is the climax of La Nouvelle Héloïse and is an integral part of the novel

as a whole.

The novel itself is concerned with the struggle between passion and virtue, chiefly as it takes place in the life and death of what proves to be the ideal woman. Julie is not the Greek ideal, the early Christian ideal, nor even M. de Wolmar's ideal, but the ideal of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. She has the extreme "sensibilité," the love of God and virtue of the author himself; at the same time she has a reputation for being rather vocal, for she is often referred to as "la prêcheuse." Thus she is able to embrace, to express at great length, and to demonstrate with her life Rousseau's theories on love, virtue, Epicureanism, common sense, religion, etc. At the end of M. de Wolmar's letter we are inclined to believe that Rousseau has finished his tableau of the ideal woman, but the letter to Saint-Preux reveals, in dramatic fashion, the missing characteristic: Rousseau's ideal woman must also be tender and passionate.

That he is able to make the gradual revelation of the emotional psychology of such a woman into a drama, while working within the strict confines of the "roman épistolaire," is a tribute to Rousseau's literary genius. He accomplishes this goal by working from without, in the letters of Fanchon and of M. de Wolmar, and from within, in the letters of Julie herself. In

each case, Rousseau makes a supreme effort to be that particular character--to see, to feel, to speak, and to write as he would do. The vocabulary, the style, and the emotional atmosphere of each is different from the other. In the case of Wolmar's letter, there are further subtleties within the letter, as he, too, reflects the differences of various characters in his report to Saint-Preux. His accounts of Julie's words are particularly interesting. Her long conversation with the minister is reported in direct quotations and seems more like the "real" Julie than is the case in the recapitulation of her life (largely indirect quotation), in which the style of Wolmar seems to influence Julie's actual words. At the same time, however, Rousseau has so established the credentials of Wolmar that we are prepared to accept his reliability in recording without exaggeration both her common-sense saintly words and her common-sense saintly actions. The effort toward plausibility seems an important characteristic of the entire novel. Rousseau is telling us about an ideal woman living, up to a point, an ideal life on an ideal farm with her husband and lover. Yet Julie never seems ridiculous, because Rousseau is constantly giving reasonable explanations for her behavior. For example, he tries very hard, in the recapitulation of her life,

to make it logical that from such heredity and background there could spring such a woman. His psychological interest in Julie is not so much a matter of studying her motivations, however, as one of revealing her emotions, in the greatest detail, at various points in her life.

In the case of Julie's death, it is not her physical suffering or the color of the rug in the room or the state of the weather that Rousseau describes, but it is her unusual attitude toward dying. The long discourses serve both as a sounding board for his theories and as a means of making such an attitude believable. Julie's attitude then reflects itself in her actions, which consist of drawing her family near her and attempting to live life to the fullest, until death overtakes her. Therefore, the "scénologie" of this death consists of Rousseau's carefully prepared tableau of Julie de Wolmar, lying on her deathbed, surrounded by her loved ones, dramatically dying the ideal death as the culmination of a life lived, as ideally as possible, among the perils of passion and the rewards of virtue.

III. ATALA

Although a mathematical dissection of literature is generally distasteful, one cannot but be struck by the actual physical length of the portion of Chateaubriand's Atala¹ devoted to the death of the heroine. In the Garnier-Flammarion edition the text (excluding fourteen pages of prologue and epilogue) occupies fifty-nine pages. Of this small number, twenty-one pages, or more than one-third of the novel, are devoted to the death scenes. Thus it becomes obvious that Chateaubriand's intention was to emphasize the episode of Atala's death.

The recounting of this death is divided into two chapters, one a long one, appropriately entitled by Chateaubriand "Le Drame." The second chapter, "Les Funérailles," completes the episode. The actual death scene, occurring in "Le Drame," is presented for the most part in dialogue, whereas the funeral procedures

¹François-René de Chateaubriand, Atala, ed. by Pierre Reboul (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1964). All references to Atala in my text are to this edition, and page numbers will be indicated within parentheses.

are primarily descriptive narrative. Thus the first chapter makes us feel the tragedy of Atala's death through the poignancy of the drama as it takes place, while the second chapter enables us to see the tragedy as we are witnesses to the burial ceremonies.

There are few presentiments of the death of Atala in the earlier parts of the novel, but they are not without significance and should be commented upon. Chactas' first meeting with Atala takes place as he awaits death in an Indian prison. The first things he notices about her are her tears (symbolic of both the tragedy which will always accompany their relationship and of her "sensibilité") and the golden crucifix on her breast. The battle between religion and sensual passion, that duality which will dominate Atala's personality, is emphasized by the carefully chosen words of this first description:

Des pleurs roulaient sous sa paupière; à la lueur du feu un petit crucifix d'or brillait sur son sein. Elle était régulièrement belle; l'on remarquait sur son visage je ne sais quoi de vertueux et de passionné, dont l'attrait était irrésistible. Elle joignait à cela des grâces plus tendres; une extrême sensibilité, unie à une mélancolie profonde, respirait dans ses regards; son sourire était céleste.

Je crus que c'était la Vierge des dernières amours, cette vierge qu'on envoie au prisonnier de guerre, pour enchanter sa tombe. (p. 80)

Chateaubriand will remind his readers of this early

event at the time of the death scene, Atala recalling to Chactas both "la Vierge des dernières amours" and the golden crucifix. After telling of his first meeting with Atala, Chactas, the narrator, bursts into tears, so that we are once more warned that their relationship will be a tragic one.

The next hints of approaching death all appear in the chapter before the one entitled "Le Drame." The good priest, Father Aubry, has rescued the young couple from the storm and has decreed that upon making a Christian out of Chactas, he will give Atala to him for his bride. At these words Chactas is joyous but Atala "devint pâle comme la mort" (p. 107), for she has, of course, already taken the fatal poison. Later in the same chapter Chactas gathers the magnolia and lays it on her head, that same magnolia which will figure prominently in the wake scene. He and Father Aubry also hike through the Indian cemetery of the Mission, "les Bocages de la mort," which is in the area where Atala will be buried (p.109).

Even had Chateaubriand not entitled his death chapter "Le Drame," it would be hard to miss the dramatic characteristics of the style he employs. There is a minimum of significant interruption from Chactas, the savage narrator who intervenes once, in

order to introduce the chapter, or "third" act as it might be called; and occasionally to describe briefly the particular scene. These scenes are reminiscent of Diderot's tableaux, where at moments of stress the characters came together at center stage, without speaking, to form a sort of painting. For example:

" . . . le vieillard nous saisit l'un et l'autre dans ses bras, et tous trois, dans l'ombre, nous mêlons un moment nos sanglots sur cette couche funèbre" (p. 121).

The dialogue, then, carries nearly all the weight of the death scene. In the dialogue we find the first warnings of death; insight into the character of Atala, Father Aubry, and Chactas; the dramatic progression of the death; classic reversal of the situation through words which appear consoling yet only intensify the tragedy; a monologue by Atala, describing the internal conflict she has suffered; and the sermon-like speeches of the priest in defense of Christianity. These last consume nearly five pages, or over one-third of the fourteen and one-half pages of "Le Drame." In the course of Father Aubry's speeches, Chateaubriand espouses his views on an enlightened Christianity, inspired by the unnecessary death of Atala.

The three characters of Chateaubriand's drama

are all revealed as essentially good people, yet there is a definite hierarchy involved here. Chactas, the narrator, is old and wise and has visited the continent of Europe and talked with the great of his time. But the Chactas of "Le Drame" is the ignorant, passionate young savage. He has moments of natural intuitive wisdom, such as his condemnation of the sort of religion which has held Atala to her unnatural vow, but for the most part he still reverts to naïve superstition and is over-emotional. His language often reflects his pagan background. But, even in his savage state, he is impressed by the power of Christianity as he sees it in action in the personality of the other two characters.

Atala is an ignorant Christian. She has the proper faith, but her introduction to the great religion has been on faulty ground. In addition, she is a living example of the conflict of the duality of man, her passionate nature always at odds with her religious beliefs. Her tragic death serves to capture the reader's interest, and then the real hero of the drama comes forward, the enlightened Christian, Father Aubry. He, too, has a dual personality, for he appears sometimes in the role of compassionate fellow human being and at others in that of the lofty priest, in direct

communication with the sublime. His basic understanding and common sense are revealed in his lack of concern toward Chactas' religion when he saves the two lovers, his compromise with the Indians concerning their Christian-pagan burial ground, his forgiveness of Atala's suicide, and his condemnation of the priest who had accepted the inhuman vow of the mother. Yet he speaks with the stern voice of the Church when he condemns Chactas for his blasphemy, and later when he consoles Atala by demonstrating how fleeting is life and its passions as compared with the joys of an eternal life to come.

Thus, "le père Aubry" emerges as Chateaubriand's Christian ideal--a man who has experienced the torments of the flesh, the hardships and loneliness of a ministry among the savages, and has found the meaning of life in his religion. In communicating that religion to others he has retained his compassion but he never hesitates to call on the authority of his position. As we follow the action of "Le Drame" in the chronological order in which it unfolds, interesting details of style, vocabulary, and dramatic technique will be commented upon. It is also to be hoped that there will emerge significant evidence of character traits to support the foregoing brief analyses.

The third act of the drama opens with a comment from Chactas as narrator: "Si mon songe de bonheur fut vif, il fut aussi d'une courte durée, et le réveil m'attendait à la grotte du Solitaire" (p. 115). Thus Chateaubriand, with great economy, refers to the act which has just preceded, one in which Chactas has had a glimpse of the happy life which might have been his, and, looking forward, sounds the warning note of tragedy that is to come. In the same paragraph, this foreboding is further developed when Atala does not run to meet them as expected. Chactas is filled with terror as his savage intuition tells him: " . . . mon imagination était également épouvantée, ou du bruit, ou du silence qui succéderait à mes cris." It is dark at the opening of the cave and Chactas, betraying primitive superstition, begs the priest to enter: "O vous, que le ciel accompagne et fortifie, pénétrez dans ces ombres."

In the second paragraph it is Chactas, this time in his role of sage and narrator, who comments: "Qu'il est faible celui que les passions dominent! Qu'il est fort celui qui se repose en Dieu!" Here we have stated what might be considered the text of the sermon which Chateaubriand will preach later through the words of Father Aubry and the crux of the lesson

to be learned from the entire episode of Atala's death.

Returning to his Indian role, Chactas says of himself:

"Poussant un cri, et retrouvant mes forces, je m'élançai dans la nuit de la caverne... Esprits de mes pères! vous savez seuls le spectacle qui frappa mes yeux!"

(p. 115). The spectacle which he sees is that of Atala, terribly ill, with the priest standing over her, holding a "flambeau de pin." Here we have one of the combinations, frequent with Chateaubriand, of a religious word and an exotic word. The "flambeau," in the hands of the priest, has a religious connotation, but it is made of "pin," a precise variety of tree easily available in southern America. There follows a short, very realistic physical description of Atala:

Cette belle et jeune femme, à moitié soulevée sur le coude, se montrait pâle et échevelée. Les gouttes d'une sueur pénible brillaient sur son front; ses regards à demi éteints cherchaient encore à m'exprimer son amour, et sa bouche essayait de sourire. (p. 115)

Accompanying this realism, which is rare in the drama, is a strong lyricism. The first sentence might be scanned 6/3/3/3/4/5, while the second terminates in three word groups of three beats each. The internal rhyme includes the words "moitié," "soulevée," "montrait," "échevelée," "brillaient," "cherchaient," "m'exprimer," and "essayait." There are also many

repetitions of the sounds of "ou," "ch," "l," "s," and "r."

When Atala speaks for the first time, her words reveal, more clearly than the ominous hints which have preceded, that what we have to contend with here is nothing less than death itself. To the priest it is a simple statement of fact: "Mon père, . . . je touche au moment de la mort" (p. 116). Atala then turns to her lover, for whom the situation is more complicated: "O Chactas! écoute sans désespoir le funeste secret que je t'ai caché, pour ne pas te rendre trop misérable, et pour obéir à ma mère." She is already thinking in terms of his probable reaction, and is hinting at the reasons for her plight, on which she will elaborate later. Again there is some attempt at realism as Atala speaks of her heart which is slowing down, and there are pauses in her speech. There is a complete lack of realism, however, in that neither the priest nor Chactas says anything in response to her announcement of approaching death. Nor is there any realism in her ability to deliver the long, unbroken passage in which she relates to them the first part of her unfortunate story. Atala speaks of "ma destinée," and the entire account is filled with strong vocabulary and expressions which contribute

to an impression of sadness and helplessness before a relentless fate: "Ma mère m'avait conçue dans le malheur; je fatiguais son sein, et elle me mit au monde avec de grands déchirements d'entrailles: on désespéra de ma vie" (p. 116). To save her life, Atala's mother promised to consecrate her daughter's virginity: "Voeu fatal qui me précipite au tombeau!" (p. 116). From time to time, as in this case, Atala relates the past to the present situation. Death is perhaps a bit more imminent here than when she mentioned it last.

Atala continues her story, telling how her mother, on her death bed and in the presence of a priest, made her swear never to betray the virginity vow, or else the mother would suffer "des tourments éternels" (p. 117). At this point Atala voices her only resentment against her mother and her religion:

O ma mère! pourquoi parlâtes-vous ainsi! O Religion qui fais à la fois mes maux et ma félicité, qui me perds et qui me consoles! Et toi, cher et triste objet d'une passion qui me consume jusque dans les bras de la mort, tu vois maintenant, ô Chactas, ce qui a fait la rigueur de notre destinée! (p. 117)

Thus, for the first time Atala juxtaposes the two conflicting elements of Christianity itself and the two elements of her own conflict, her religious oath and her passion. These conflicts will be greatly

developed a little later in the scene. Chateaubriand has used the word "destinée" again, as in the beginning of this speech, and Atala will use it once more, very near her death, illustrating the author's genius at creating drama by continually referring to what has gone before and hinting at what is to come.

In an interesting display of self-analysis, Atala describes how easily she kept the vow, giving us a good picture of the innocence of the proud young Spanish-Indian girl. With great economy and simplicity she presents the sudden wave of passion which not only contrasts with but destroys her previous complacency: "Je te vis, jeune et beau prisonnier, je m'attendris sur ton sort, je t'osai parler au bûcher de la forêt; alors je sentis tout le poids de mes vœux" (p. 117). As is often the case, Chateaubriand adds a special lyric touch to Atala's intimate speeches to Chactas. Here the sentence scans something like 3/6/7/12/5/6. The internal rhyme is within the verbs: "je te vis," "je m'attendris," and "je sentis." There are approximately four nearly similar "e" sounds in the alexandrine-like "je t'osai parler au bûcher de la forêt," and there are the usual "r," "s," and "t" repetitions.

Chactas interrupts suddenly, demonstrating the theory that the savage may on occasion have more sense

than the civilized: "La voilà donc cette religion que vous m'avez tant vantée! Périssent le serment qui m'enlève Atala! Périssent le Dieu qui contrarie la nature! Homme, prêtre, qu'es-tu venu faire dans ces forêts?" (pp. 117-118). It is interesting to note that he includes the priest in his condemnation, first by calling him "homme" and then by shifting to the familiar form of the verb. Father Aubry answers him immediately and at great length, speaking in the three voices of the church: that of harsh reprimand for sin, sweet forgiveness after penitence, and hopeful consolation. The dialogue of the first paragraph is delivered "d'une voix terrible" (p. 118), and the priest addresses Chactas as "jeune homme, à peine entré dans la vie," and as "malheureux." He, too, uses the familiar form of the verb, and his attitude is that of one cross-examining and judging an unworthy child. Aubry asks five scathing questions, three beginning with "où sont," and two beginning with "quel." Essentially they concern whether Chactas has actually suffered or been wronged and what he may have done for the good of mankind. The priest assumes a negative answer to all his questions, for he proceeds to summarize Chactas' only contribution as being that of his passion, hardly sufficient credentials for him to "accuser le ciel." Father Aubry

then contrasts his own thirty years of experience in the wilderness with the youth and inexperience of Chactas, pointing out that he has learned both his own unworthiness and his lack of fitness to challenge "la Providence." His stern words, his stormy, God-of-Moses-like appearance, and his "majesté" reduce Chactas to submission: "Les éclairs qui sortaient des yeux du vieillard, sa barbe qui frappait sa poitrine, ses paroles foudroyantes le rendaient semblable à un Dieu." Immediately after Chactas' penitence, Father Aubry changes his role and speaks "avec un accent si doux," calling Chactas "mon fils" three times, then "mon cher enfant"; he even apologizes for his severity. The whole speech ends on a positive note as he points out: "Chactas, c'est une religion bien divine que celle-là, qui a fait une vertu de l'espérance" (p. 118).

The focus of attention now returns to Atala, who in her next speech describes the psychological conflict which has killed her just as surely as the poison she has taken. This passage, the outstanding one of "Le Drame," is beautifully constructed to show the mounting conflict and the mounting passion which could have no other climax than death. The conflict and the contradictions will be demonstrated by juxtaposing them more or less as they occur in the passage:

Mon jeune ami, reprit Atala
tu as été témoin de mes combats / et cependant tu
n'en as vu que la
moindre partie;
je te cachais le reste. (p. 118)

Atala then contrasts four conditions, two of which, though bad and expressed negatively, she considers to be better than her own. These negative ones include the situation of the black slave in Florida and the hypothetical one of herself, had the problem simply been a matter of leaving her parents or losing her soul. She then describes her own condition, first her indecisiveness before their flight:

Te sollicitant à la fuite / et pourtant certaine de mourir si tu t'éloignais de moi;

craignant de fuir avec
toi dans les déserts, / et cependant haletant après
l'ombrage des bois... (p. 119)

The reason for the indecisiveness is the vision of her mother in Hell. There are still contrasts within her condition after the flight:

loin de m'apporter la fraîcheur / et les brises
s'embrasaient du
feu de mon souffle.

Quel tourment
de te voir sans cesse auprès de
moi, loin de tous les hommes,
dans de profondes solitudes / et de sentir entre
toi et moi un
barrière invincible!
(p. 119)

The diagram points up the stylistic balancing of verb forms, the fact that the entire passage is constructed by means of contrast, and that the close positioning of so many opposites has created an electricity for Chateaubriand's drama.

There are, of course, other techniques used. One is the matter of heat, normally associated with passion. Atala compares herself to the slave in Florida (tropical region), "qui arrose de ses sueurs les sables ardents." Later she envisions her mother in the "flammes de l'enfer." Her nights are "arides." She herself is on fire, for she says the evening dew dries "en tombant sur ma peau brûlante." And the breezes, instead of refreshing her as they should, "s'embrasaient du feu de mon souffle." (The onomatopoeia is noteworthy in this sentence fragment.)

The purely physical aspect of the passion is not ignored. In the early stages of the passion, Atala is "haletant après l'ombrage des bois." Later, in the section where she feels on fire she half opens her lips to the breezes, an attitude associated with passion. The matter of their solitude is often referred to: " . . . te voir sans cesse auprès de moi, loin de tous les hommes, dans de profondes solitudes." The climactic sentence in the build-up of the passions begins with

a physical cause: "Quelquefois en attachant mes yeux sur toi . . . " It is noteworthy that she is not merely looking at him, but fixing her eyes on him. As a result desire takes over and the passion of the entire paragraph culminates in a great crescendo, a mixture of the physical and the metaphysical: " . . . serrée dans tes bras, j'eussé roule d'abîme en abîme avec les débris de Dieu et du monde!"

There is temporal progress in the passage as Atala tells first of the early days of their love, and then of their sojourn in the wilderness, finally ending with the present. But it is a present dominated by a foreboding future: " . . . à présent que l'éternité va m'engloutir, que je vais paraître devant le Juge inexorable . . . " In the face of such a future, the physical passion still dominates, making Atala a most human and sympathetic heroine as she rhythmically expresses the intimate regret "de n'avoir pas été à toi."

Before leaving this passage it should be noted how poetic it is in imagery, in musical sound, rhythm, and even in internal rhyme. There is the exotic comparison with the black Florida slave "qui arrose de ses sueurs les sables ardents de la Floride." This sentence is also remarkable for its alliteration. In

addition to the "s" sounds which are so prominent here, there are numerous "r" and "t" sounds. These will be repeated many times throughout the paragraph, along with "l," "f," "p," and "k." The interior rhyme is very heavy. For example, we have "cependant," "ardents," "solicitant," "pourtant," "craignant," "cependant," "haletant," "reprochant," "tourment," "tombant," "brûlante," "tourment," "attachant," "vivante," "sentant," "présent," "présent," "devant," and "moment." There are also "fuir," "mourir," "sentir," "jouir," "engloutir," and "obéir." To rhyme with "moi," there are "bois," "toi," "moi," "toi," "vois," "joie," and "toi" once more. The diagramming of the contrasts within the paragraph also pointed up the balance of the passage. There is one alexandrine-like fragment: "Quel tourment de te voir sans cesse auprès de moi, . . . "

Father Aubry, representing enlightened religion and/or Chateaubriand's version of it, seeks to offer consolation and a way out of the dilemma: "La religion n'exige point de sacrifice plus qu'humain . . . , j'écirai à l'évêque de Québec; il a les pouvoirs nécessaires pour vous relever de vos vœux, qui ne sont que des vœux simples, et vous achèverez vos jours près de moi avec Chactas votre époux" (p. 120).

Here we have a classic "Reversal of the Situation" as described by Aristotle. Recognition follows which, "as the name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge. . . ."² Aristotle preferred a recognition of persons, but in this case it is recognition by Atala that she did not need to take the poison after all and the subsequent discovery by Chactas and Father Aubry that she has done so. At the mention of the word "poison," "le flambeau échappe de la main du Solitaire" Thus for a moment the priest loses the symbol of his religion and becomes merely a suffering, sympathetic human being. After one of the Diderot-like scenes previously referred to, the priest regains control of himself "en allumant une lampe!" Chactas' barbaric reaction cannot be related through dialogue but requires an interruption which is almost a stage direction: "Ce ne fut plus ici par des sanglots que je troublai le récit d'Atala, ce fut par ces emportements qui ne sont connus que des Sauvages. Je me roulai furieux sur la terre en me tordant les bras, et en me dévorant les mains" (p. 121).

This interruption in the dialogue, the first of any length for several pages, continues in order to

²Poetics, Chapt. XI.

describe the tender ministering of the priest and the worsening of Atala's physical condition. Reinforcing his text again, Chateaubriand says through Chactas that Aubry "savait se faire entendre à notre jeunesse, et sa religion lui fournissait des accents plus tendres et plus brûlants que nos passions mêmes" (p. 122). To show that Atala is getting closer to the end, Chateaubriand uses two sentences of narrative, one a combination of a psychological diagnosis of the cause of her illness and an elegant periphrasis of its conclusion; the second a very realistic physical description, combined with a comment from Atala herself, the frightening effect of which makes Chactas' hair stand on end:

La fatigue, le chagrin, le poison et une passion plus mortelle que tous les poisons ensemble, se réunissaient pour ravir cette fleur à la solitude. Vers le soir, des symptômes effrayants se manifestèrent; un engourdissement général saisit les membres d'Atala, et les extrémités de son corps commencèrent à refroidir: Touche mes doigts, me disait-elle, ne les trouves-tu pas bien glacés? Je ne savais que répondre, et mes cheveux se hérissaient d'horreur; . . . (p. 122)

She adds to this impression of fading forces by complaining of a diminution of three of the senses: " . . . je ne sens plus ta main, je n'entends presque plus ta voix, les objets de la grotte disparaissent tour à tour" (p. 122). Here again there is a strong

attention to rhythm and sound. The sentence beginning the long quotation above starts out 3/3/3/7/7. After the balanced "et voilà que je ne sens plus ta main, je n'entends presque plus ta voix," with its rhyming verb sounds, the sentence terminates "les objets de la grotte disparaissent tour à tour (6/7). Again the "r," "s," and "t" sounds are predominant.

Atala then indulges in a bit of self-pity and regret. She raises the issue of the life she will miss, "mourir si jeune . . . quand mon coeur était si plein de vie!" and asks Aubry if God and her mother will forgive her. These are the cue words for the priest's sermon, a matter of three pages. It must be remembered that Atala and René were parts of Le Génie du Christianisme, each attached as a sort of demonstratio of his serious religious precepts. Atala was included in the Fifth Book of Part Three, "Harmonies de la religion chrétienne avec les scènes de la nature et les passions du coeur humain." Thus, after generous portions of nature and passion, it is time for Chateaubriand to bring the third element, Christianity, into action. First Father Aubry assures Atala of her pardon by God, the author taking the opportunity to criticize certain zealots of his day: "Vous offrez tous trois un terrible exemple des dangers de l'enthous-

siasme, et du défaut de lumières en matière de religion" (p. 123). Then, in answer to Atala's regret of missing life and love, he paints a rather bitter picture of the frailty and instability of human passion and marriage:

"Je vous épargne les détails des soucis du ménage, les disputes les reproches mutuels, les inquiétudes et toutes ces peines secrètes qui veillent sur l'oreiller du lit conjugal" (p. 124). Ending on a positive note he declares, in words appropriate to someone describing the ceremony of a nun taking her vows:

Remerciez donc la Bonté divine, ma chère fille, qui vous retire si vite de cette vallée de misère. Déjà le vêtement blanc et la couronne éclatante des vierges se préparent pour vous . . . Venez, rose mystique vous reposer sur le sein de Jésus-Christ. Ce cercueil, lit nuptial que vous vous êtes choisi, ne sera point trompé; et les embrassements de votre céleste époux ne finiront jamais! (p. 125)

From this moment forward, religion having properly cooled the passions, Atala no longer thinks in terms of herself. She seeks only to console Chactas, espousing the theory of Providence working in all things in a sort of local-color parable: "Le coeur, ô Chactas, est comme ces sortes d'arbres qui ne donnent leur baume pour les blessures des hommes que lorsque le fer les a blessés eux-mêmes" (p. 126). As the night progresses, Chateaubriand lyrically describes the acknowledged "scene," even furnishing a heavenly "audience"

to watch religion's battle against other personified forces:

L'humble grotte était remplie de la grandeur de ce trépas chrétien, et les esprits célestes étaient, sans doute, attentifs à cette scène où la religion luttait seule contre l'amour, la jeunesse et la mort.

Elle triomphait, cette religion divine, et l'on s'apercevait de sa victoire à une sainte tristesse qui succédait dans nos coeurs aux premiers transports des passions. (p. 126)

Thus Chateaubriand has combined and morally assessed his favorite themes: the beauties of Christianity; the primitive life (l'humble grotte); and human, passionate love, concluding with a moral assessment of the whole.

Another fairly realistic description of Atala occurs just before her last speech: "Ici la voix d'Atala s'éteignit; les ombres de la mort se répandirent autour de ses yeux et de sa bouche; . . . " (p. 127).

We then learn, by means of dialogue, that she gives Chactas her crucifix, convincing him of its value by recalling to him, in the same words used by the author at that time: "Quand je te parlai pour la première fois, tu vis cette croix briller à la lueur du feu sur mon sein; c'est le seul bien que possède Atala. Lopez, ton père et le mien, l'envoya à ma mère peu de jours après ma naissance" (p. 127). Coming from their common parent, Lopez, it is, therefore, "cet héritage." She asks Chactas to become a Christian, not for theological

reasons, but for human love of her: "Si tu m'as aimée . . . " Her speech, though she is so near death, is entirely logical and clear. Atala shows her fairness and what she has herself learned from life by asking Chactas to make a simple promise rather than a vow, for "peut-être ce vœu te séparerait-il de quelque femme plus heureuse que moi" (p. 128). The thoughts of this future rival seem to stir her human passions one final time, as manifested in her last words: "O ma mère, pardonne à ta fille. O Vierge, retenez votre courroux. Je retombe dans mes faiblesses, et je te dérobe, ô mon Dieu, des pensées qui ne devraient être que pour toi!" Thus, Christian though she may be, this simple Indian maid is passionate to the end of her life.

When Chactas makes the promise to accept her religion, the priest, extending his arms toward "la voûte de la grotte" (mixture of the religious and the realistic) announces: " . . . il est temps d'appeler Dieu ici!" (p. 128). The ceremony of Extreme Unction is then recounted in the language of the savage Chactas, who feels rather than understands its meaning. Told in terms of what Chactas sees, hears and imagines, it has emotional and dramatic impact:

La grotte parut soudain illuminée; on entendit dans les airs les paroles des anges et les frémissements des harpes célestes; et lorsque le Solitaire tira le vâge sacré de son tabernacle, je crus voir Dieu lui-même sortir du flanc de la montagne. (p. 128)

Here Chateaubriand has, in effect, turned up the stage lights and brought the orchestral accompaniment to a crescendo. Of Atala, who has already transcended the human state, he says simply: "Cette sainte avait les yeux levés au ciel, en extase." The climax of the scene is also recounted in simple sentences:

Ensuite le divin vieillard trempe un peu de coton dans une huile consacrée; il en frotte les tempes d'Atala, il regarde un moment la fille mourante, et tout à coup ces fortes paroles lui échappent: "Partez, âme chrétienne; allez rejoindre votre Créateur!" Relevant alors ma tête abattue, je m'écriai, en regardant le vase où était l'huile sainte: "Mon père, ce remède rendra-t-il la vie à Atala?" "Oui, mon fils, dit le vieillard en tombant dans mes bras, la vie éternelle!" Atala venait d'expirer. (pp. 128-129)

Again the lyricism is noteworthy. There is balance everywhere in the quotation, particularly in the alexandrine-like "ce remède, rendra-t-il, la vie à Atala" (3/3//2/4). The repetition of "m," "v," and "t" sounds is sufficiently numerous to be significant.

Thus ends the drama, fulfilling the third requirement for the plot of tragedy as stated by Aristotle: "A third part is the Scene of Suffering. The Scene of Suffering is a destructive or painful action,

such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds and the like."³ In this case the final dramatic moment is greatly enhanced by the primitive naïveté of Chactas, who, thinking the holy unction is a medical remedy, asks the simple question: "Mon père, ce remède rendra-t-il la vie à Atala," followed by the priest's seemingly simple, yet infinitely complex answer: "Oui, mon fils, . . . la vie éternelle!" Father Aubry at this point reduced to human frailty, falls into the savage's arms.

The scene describing the burial of Atala is typical of Chateaubriand at his very best. He seems to rise to his greatest heights whenever he can combine human love, religion, and nature, and all of these elements are present in the chapter "Les Funérailles." As previously mentioned there is much less dialogue and more narration in this chapter than in "Le Drame." Thus, the asset of the varied background of the narrator, Chactas, is even more important. At times he is the old sage who is recounting the story, able to insert wise comments, while on other occasions he is the young passionate lover, becoming himself the actor in the scene. Thus he may speak in a variety of languages and may convey seemingly conflicting attitudes without being

³Poetics, Chapt. XI.

implausible.

The passage which will be examined begins with "Le juste refusa de m'abandonner le corps de la fille de Lopez . . . " (p. 132), and ends " . . . et j'achevai de couvrir Atala de la terre du sommeil" (p. 134).

After two days of mourning, the Christian priest and the pagan Chactas are in some conflict as to the disposition of Atala's body, though even in this conflict Chactas refers to Aubry as "le juste." A compromise is reached, allowing the author to create the unique burial scene which will be a mixture of the Christian and the primitive:

"Nous convînmes que nous partirions le lendemain au lever du soleil pour enterrer Atala sous l'arche du pont naturel à l'entrée des Bocages de la mort" (p. 132).

As stated earlier, the groundwork for the description of this area, its great natural beauty and its double character of Indian and Christian has been carefully laid in an earlier chapter.

The agreed-upon vigil begins:

Vers le soir, nous transportâmes ses précieux restes à une ouverture de la grotte, qui donnait vers le nord. L'ermite les avait roulés dans une pièce de lin d'Europe, filé par sa mère: c'était le seul bien qui lui restât de sa patrie, et depuis longtemps il le destinait à son propre tombeau. (p. 132)

The piece of linen introduced here in the scene seems to fulfill several purposes: first its donation serves as

a fine tribute to the wonderful character of the priest; secondly it provides a reason for the white drapery on the Indian maiden. The priest, in the death chapter, had promised Atala that she would become the bride of Christ in her casket, her nuptial bed, and that the "vêtement blanc" was being prepared for her (p. 125). Still further use will be made of this white shroud in the next sentence, where Chateaubriand begins to hint at a comparison with a statue, a comparison left vague until the last sentence of the paragraph:

"Quiconque . . . aurait pu la prendre pour la statue de la Virginité endormie." Although she rests "sur un gazon de sensitives de [sic] montagnes" (which reminds us that we are, after all, in the forest), "ses pieds, sa tête, ses épaules et une partie de son sein étaient découverts." If we imagine the white linen covering those parts which are not bare, we can see that what we have here is the conventional draping of a female statue. Continuing to paint his tableau, the author tells us: "On voyait dans ses cheveux une fleur de magnolia fanée...celle-là même que j'avais déposée sur le lit de la vierge, pour la rendre féconde." As a flower peculiar to the Southern United States, the magnolia contributes to the exoticism. Being white it adds to the general impression of

whiteness which Chateaubriand is gradually building. The fact that Chactas had put it on her bed in a moment of happiness and hope adds poignancy to the tragedy. That it is a "faded" flower, links it to the old metaphor of the flower which is like the fleeting beauty of a young girl. This metaphor is again revived in the next sentence where it is expressed in the more common symbol of the rose: "Ses lèvres, comme un bouton de rose cueilli depuis deux matins, semblaient languir et sourire" (p. 132). Here the insistence is more on lingering life ("languir et sourire") and would seem to reinforce the adjective "endormie" which is used in the last sentence to modify "statue." "Dans ses joues d'une blancheur éclatante, on distinguait quelques veines bleues." Perhaps Chateaubriand may be accused in this case of exaggeration in order to insist on the whiteness of the scene, for the daughter of an Indian maid and a Spanish gentleman is not likely to have the extremely white skin, nor skin of the translucent type he is trying to describe. The next sentence again contributes to the concept of the statue, in that her eyes are closed and her hands are of alabaster: "Ses beaux yeux étaient fermés, ses pieds modestes étaient joints, et ses mains d'albâtre pressaient sur son coeur un crucifix d'ébène; le scapulaire de ses

voeux était passé à son cou." There seem also to be two signs of life in this sentence: the adjective "modestes," implying a mental attitude and the verb "pressaient," describing how she presses the crucifix to her heart. There are two symbols here of her religion, the cross (hope) and the scapulary (vow), perhaps referring to her earlier statement: "O Religion qui fais à la fois mes maux et ma félicité, qui me perds et qui me consoles!" (p. 117). The crucifix is of ebony, its blackness creating a stark contrast with all the whiteness.

Beginning with the next two sentences, the final ones of the paragraph, Chateaubriand substitutes an impressionistic description for the visual one that he has created thus far, but this impression is the natural result of the carefully chosen specific details which have preceded it:

Elle paraissait enchantée par l'Ange de la
 mélancolie, et par le double sommeil de l'innocence
 et de la tombe. Je n'ai rien vu de plus
 céleste. Quiconque eût ignoré que cette jeune
 fille avait joui de la lumière, aurait pu la
 prendre pour la statue de la Virginité
 endormie. (p. 132)

Chactas, in saying that she seems to be "enchantée par l'ange de la mélancolie," betrays the fact that, though on the verge of becoming a Christian, he is still the primitive who feels in this event a magic presence which he must personify. Atala is also "enchantée . . .

par le double sommeil de l'innocence et de la tombe." Here Chateaubriand begins to summarize, with great economy, the idea that has been building throughout the passage--that of lingering life (here she sleeps like a child) and that of the statue, or cold death (the sleep of the tomb). As for himself, Chactas says he has never seen anything so "divine," perhaps combining his admiration for the beauty of Atala and the religious overtones of the scene. He then immediately broadens the scope of the passage by opening the last sentence with "quiconque"; "anyone" would have felt as he did. Drawing the whole paragraph to a very beautiful and marvelously integrated climax, Chateaubriand finally states his metaphor in the combination of two words which present the two aspects of "Atala morte": "statue de la Virginité endormie."

Interior rhyme is produced in this paragraph with the "ait" sound of the many verbs in the imperfect tense (sixteen) and the many past participles with the similar sound of "é." Other examples of similar sounds are "lin" and "bien," "languir" and "sourire," "cueilli" and "jouï," "mélancolie" and "endormie." The first two sentences end in word groups of six beats each. The poetic metaphor of the rose is accompanied by a near-alexandrine clause: "comme un bouton de rose cueilli

depuis deux matins." The rhythm here is typical of that used by Chateaubriand: he is writing in a poetic manner but he never forgets that he is writing prose. Sentences are rhythmically balanced, but seldom absolutely so. There are many fragments with poetic rhythms, but few lines which could be called a line of verse.

The next paragraph returns to a consideration of the other two characters. Although both had agreed to spend the night praying, the actual fact is that while "Le religieux ne cessa de prier toute la nuit," Chactas passes the hours "en silence," in a short reverie of the past. Three sentences point up the pathetic contrast of love just past and a cruel present. Continuing the idea of sleep from the last paragraph, Chactas reflects on other, happier times, when he has seen Atala truly asleep and has listened to and inhaled her breath. Now "aucun bruit" contrasts with the time when he could hear her breath; "ce sein immobile" will produce no "souffle"; and he will wait in vain for "le réveil de la beauté" (p. 133).

Chateaubriand completes his description of the scene, in terms of what one can see, in the first three sentences of the next paragraph, giving us, though very briefly, one of his famous "clairs de lune."

He is like a painter, standing back and looking at his nearly finished canvas, who decides to wash it over with moonlight. However, he will use the moon not so much to convey a physical phenomenon as to add to the mood of melancholy. He immediately personifies the moon, for she "prêta son pâle flambeau à cette veillée funèbre" (p. 133). Only a human being can loan an object, and in the same phrase he manages to separate the moon from her light. Next she rises in the middle of the night, as a moon or a person might do, but "comme une blanche vestale qui vient pleurer sur le cercueil d'une compagne." If Atala is the companion of a "blanche vestale," then the statue created in the earlier paragraph is perhaps that of a vestal virgin, or a classic statue. Continuing the personification, as the moon rises higher "elle répandit dans les bois," a verb which one expects to convey the idea of light spreading over the woods, but Chateaubriand finishes the sentence with "ce grand secret de mélancolie, qu'elle aime à raconter aux vieux chênes et aux rivages antiques des mers." Once again the moon is fulfilling her ancient function of acquainting nature with melancholy, or human feeling. At this point, in mid-paragraph, the visual scene ends. There is one sentence of transition before an auditive description begins. This transition

is made by means of another one of the senses, that of smell, for the old priest waves a flowering branch, dipped in an "eau consacrée." The result is a perfume which combines the elements of nature and of heaven.

Father Aubry then begins to quote from Job, whom Chactas naïvely refers to as "un vieux poète nommé Job." In his Génie du Christianisme, Chateaubriand tells of his admiration for Job: "Aucun écrivain n'a poussé la tristesse de l'âme au degré où elle a été portée par le saint Arabe, . . . L'homme individuel, si misérable qu'il soit, ne peut tirer de tels soupirs de son âme. Job est la figure de l'humanité souffrante, . . . "4

These comments are followed by several excerpts from Job, one being the same as the second used in Atala, though Chactas does not quote it exactly as it appears here: "Pourquoi le jour a-t-il été donné au misérable, et la vie à ceux qui sont dans l'amertume du coeur." Of this line Chateaubriand says: "Jamais les entrailles de l'homme n'ont fait sortir de leur profondeur un cri plus douloureux."⁵ The other line from Job which appears

⁴Ed. by Thérèse Delarouzée (Paris: Larousse, 1962), II, 79.

⁵Ibid., II, 80.

in Atala is not quoted in Le Génie du Christianisme: "J'ai passé comme une fleur; j'ai séché comme l'herbe des champs" (p. 133). It is perhaps used here for its special significance in the death of the young girl. The insertion of these lines from Job, whose writings we know to be so admired by Chateaubriand, are further evidence of the fact that he is determined to create a very special impression.

"Ainsi chantait l'ancien des hommes. Sa voix grave et un peu cadencée, allait roulant dans le silence des déserts" (p. 133). Just before the Biblical quotation, Chateaubriand said that Father Aubry repeated Job "sur un air antique," but despite this fact, there seems in the sentence just quoted a sort of synthesis of the voices of Job and the priest. When we first read "l'ancien des hommes" we think the author means Job; this impression might continue as the sound rolls out into the desert. But then the paragraph goes on and it is, of course, Father Aubry who is chanting. As this voice rolls into the silence of the deserts, the scene suddenly enlarges into a spreading echo. Beginning with silence, we have first the slightly rhythmic voice of the priest whose funereal religious chants are then returned "de tous les échos, de tous les torrents, de toutes les forêts" (p. 133).

The parallelism of this sentence is achieved by the repetition of "de tous les" and the 5/5/5 rhythm of the complements. Meanwhile, not only more sound is building up but more space is being covered. Then there are added to the chorus some very specific elements expressed with onomatopoetic words: "les roucoulements de la colombe de Virginie" (exoticism); "la chute d'un torrent dans la montagne" (nature); and "les tintements de la cloche" (the Church). The second use of "torrent" seems a rather weak choice in this grouping, but it does provide interior rhyme with "roucoulements" and "tintements." Five verbs in the imperfect tense furnish a rhyming "ait" sound, which together with the many nasals, and frequent occurrences of "t," "r," "s," "d," and "l," contribute to the poetic effect. The fusion of all these sounds returns, as a mournful response from the dead, to the priest with whom the paragraph began: " . . . et l'on croyait entendre dans les Bocages de la mort le choeur lointain des décedés, qui répondait à la voix du Solitaire." This paragraph, a sorrowful chant in itself, is perhaps the most beautiful of the passage.

In contrast with the night of the wake, the description of the funeral procession and the preparation of the grave is a very plastic one, involving movement

and change of scenery. The signal to begin is announced in two poetic ways: morning dawns, "une barre d'or se forma dans l'Orient" (p. 133); and two specific kinds of birds, sparrow hawks and martens, act in a manner characteristic of the beginning of the day. While Chactas carries the body, Aubry holds a spade, which, in view of the fact that they plan to dig the grave in a much more romantic fashion, with their bare hands, would seem to be a slight error. But here Chateaubriand is trying to give a graphic picture of the descent into the tomb, and the spade adds to his realism. It is a hard and slow descent--no path as they move "de rochers en rochers" (p. 134). Physically they are each slowed down, the priest by "la vieillesse" and Chactas by "la mort," the latter representing both the weight of the corpse and that of his own emotions. There are three incidents on the way to the burial spot which help mark the passage of time and contribute to the impression of difficulty of the march. Of the first Chactas says: "A la vue du chien qui nous avait trouvés dans la forêt, et qui maintenant bondissant de joie, nous traçait une autre route, je me mis à fondre en larmes." As is often the case with grief, an unexpected confrontation with some material link with the deceased, can give rise to a sudden surge of

emotion. Here it is made more painful by the "joie" of the uncomprehending animal. The next two incidents are preceded by the word "souvent," so that we know that they occurred more than once during the journey. The two experiences are given parallel construction, but the first is romantic and poetic while the second is quite realistic: "Souvent la longue chevelure d'Atala, jouet des brises matinales, étendait son voile d'or sur mes yeux; souvent pliant sous le fardeau, j'étais obligé de le déposer sur la mousse, et de m'asseoir auprès, pour reprendre des forces" (p. 134). The image of the hair--golden because of the time of day as well as the Spanish father, we must assume--is perhaps a bit farfetched, but the hair, "jouet des brises matinales," is a beautiful combination of the natural phenomenon and a hint of its philosophic meaning. The mourners arrive "enfin" and again there is descent: " . . . nous descendîmes sous l'arche du pont." All motion in this paragraph has been downward and culminates in Atala's temporary resting place, surely the lowest in the valley, "dans la ravine desséchée d'un torrent." The view of Atala is only part of another Diderot-like tableau which Chateaubriand, speaking as Chactas, the aged narrator, points out in most melodramatic fashion:

O mon fils, il eût fallu voir un jeune Sauvage
 et un vieil ermite, à genoux l'un vis-à-vis
 de l'autre dans un désert, creusant avec leurs
 mains un tombeau pour une pauvre fille dont
 le corps était étendu près de là, dans la ravine
 desséchée d'un torrent!" (p. 134)

Chactas finishes the entire funeral ceremony by recounting fairly realistically the actual burial. It is interesting to note that he makes no mention of Father Aubry at this time, though surely he must have made some religious comments. Together they place the body "dans son lit d'argile," but from then on Chactas remembers only himself and the corpse. Just as the bed of clay contrasts with Atala's beauty, it also contrasts with the marriage bed that Chactas had hoped to provide for her. After taking one last look at Atala's face, he tells in one rather remarkable and very complicated sentence how he gradually buried her with handfuls of dirt. Returning to his Indian vocabulary, he calls the dirt "terre du sommeil," and he refers to Atala's forehead "de dix-huit printemps." There is interesting parallelism and contrast in his comment: " . . . je vis graduellement disparaître les traits de ma soeur, et ses grâces se cacher sur le rideau de l'éternité." Her features seem to disappear realistically and passively under the dirt, while her charms, the intangibles, acting for themselves, hide under the curtain of eternity.

To make the scene completely graphic Chactas tells us that finally her breast is all that remains above the soil and compares it to a lily, the symbol of purity. This also continues, of course, the black and white color scheme of the wake. Then, perhaps in Indian fashion, Chactas cries out and abruptly terminates the scene: " 'Lopez, . . . vois ton fils inhumer ta fille!' et j'achevai de couvrir Atala de la terre du sommeil" (p. 134).

In view of the fact that Chateaubriand is generally considered to be a transitional writer, reflecting both the classicism of the eighteenth century and the dawning romanticism of the nineteenth, it is interesting to compare the two parts of his account of the death and burial of Atala. In most respects, "Le Drame" is largely classical whereas "Les Funerailles" shows more romantic tendencies. For example, it was pointed out in the discussion of the dramatic portion how Chateaubriand had followed the recommendations of Aristotle in regard to plot development. Also, the long didactic monologues of the priest take the drama out of its narrow dimensions in the American wilderness and link it to a plane of universal truths. In fact, it is these truths and the victory of religion over youth and passion which

furnish the principal theme of the drama.

There are, nonetheless, many lyric passages in both chapters. The passion of Atala, though condemned in theory by the author, is painted with beauty, tenderness and understanding. In many cases these moments of intimacy and also other important passages are rendered with careful attention to sound and rhythm. Even the name "Atala" must surely have been chosen for its poetic quality as well as its Indian connotation.

Periphrases find their way into both chapters, some easily identifiable as classical, ecclesiastical, or Indian; others not so easily categorized. In both chapters Atala is identified as "fille de Lopez" (somewhat Indian), but in the second she is also referred to as "cette sainte," "la vierge," "ma soeur," and her body as "ses précieux restes," terms more ecclesiastical in nature. The priest is called "le Solitaire" and "le religieux" in both chapters, but only in the first one, at the height of the last rites, is he called "le divin vieillard," and only in the second is he "le juste," and, reminiscent of Job, "l'ancien des hommes." Atala refers to approaching death in classical fashion: "Je touche au moment de la mort," and "à présent que l'éternité va m'engloutir." The priest, in the language of the Church, speaks in

"Le Drame" of life as "cette vallée de misère," of Jesus as "votre céleste époux," and of God as "celui qui sonde les reins et les coeurs." Chactas replaces the word "dawn" with "une barre d'or se forma dans l'Orient," in classical poetic manner. When burying Atala in the sandy desert, he refers to the dirt thrown on the corpse as "la terre du sommeil," which is perhaps Indian in character as is "sur un front de dix-huit printemps." The grave itself is "son lit d'argile," probably classical circumlocution and Chactas sees "ses grâces se cacher sous le rideau de l'éternité," again the vocabulary of the Church.

Whereas the priest and Atala have dominated the dramatic scene, the final chapter focuses on the narrator himself, the grief-stricken young lover, Chactas. There is little dialogue, so that what we have is the narrator's emotional attempt to make the reader see the pathos of the burial scene through the eyes of a suffering individual. To the twentieth-century reader this approach is much more effective than the sometimes overdone drama of the preceding chapter. There is a strong attempt to reach the reader and communicate the atmosphere of the tragedy through the senses of sight, odor, and hearing. There is also an impressionistic description of Atala and another of the moonlit landscape.

Although the white magnolia and various local birds are referred to, the landscape is for the most part described in fairly general terms, with much less exoticism than has been the case in previous scenes of the novel, so that once again, as in "Le Drame," the author is free to move from the particular to the universal. But the very fact that there is description of the natural scene is, of course, a break with classicism.

In the Preface to his first edition, Chateaubriand says of his novel: "C'est une sorte de poème, moitié descriptif, moitié dramatique . . . " (p. 41). It is, indeed, poetic above all else. It tries to be didactic, but the lesson sometimes gets lost in the lyric attempts to convey the emotions and the passions. The character development is essentially shallow. What remains for us when we remember the death of Atala? The answer must surely be that we remember the enchantment of the beautiful sound of Chateaubriand's prose.

IV. NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS

Whereas the deaths of Manon, Julie, and Atala have occurred under quite private circumstances, Hugo's La Esmeralda has a very public death which takes place on the Place de Grève before the eyes of anyone who happened to be abroad in the city of Paris at dawn on that fateful morning. The basic difference in the size and scope of the scene involved greatly influences Hugo's technique in handling the passages relating to La Esmeralda's death. Essentially the tragedy involves four human beings who are separated by the dizzying distance between the towers of Notre-Dame and the Place de Grève below. Yet their personal drama must not be lost in the grandeur of the scene, which has as its backdrop all of Paris and its environs. Thus visual perspective becomes all-important to the working out of the novel's dénouement.

In order to follow Hugo's technique in this endeavor, it is helpful to imagine that he is filming his novel for twentieth-century consumption. Using this analogy, one can pretend that Hugo employs two cameras to help the reader see and feel the action.

One is the close-up camera, used in the chapter entitled "Le Petit Soulier," which focuses first on La Esmeralda and the priest, as he forces her to choose between life with him and death on the gallows. The camera then focuses on Gudule, the recluse, as she and La Esmeralda discover their relationship, and finally it turns to the scene with the soldiers and the hangman. The chapter then fades out, again with movie technique, as the executioner mounts the steps to the scaffold. To make the transition to the second camera, high in the towers of Notre-Dame, Hugo's ground camera has picked up two figures in the earlier chapter "qui semblaient regarder."¹ An interesting note in the Garnier edition states that Hugo added this detail on his first re-reading of his manuscript. The second camera operates in two fashions: it records the drama which takes place between Quasimodo and the priest high in the cathedral, and it sweeps down from time to time to pick up the action as it occurs on the square, with the rising of the sun serving to orient the reader as to the progress of chronological time.

¹Victor Hugo, Notre-Dame de Paris, ed. by Marius-François Guyard (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), p. 556. All references to Notre-Dame de Paris in my text are to this edition, and page numbers will appear within parentheses.

Before attempting to follow this imaginary camera work, we should first look for hints and presages of La Esmeralda's death as they occur throughout the novel. Actually these are very few in number. Hugo first describes La Esmeralda, essentially in terms of her beauty and grace, as she dances on the Place de Grève, the same square on which she will eventually be hanged. There are present two characters who will play important parts in her tragic death: Claude Frollo and Gudule, both of whom threaten her even in this first scene (pp. 74-78). Much later La Esmeralda confides to Gringoire that of all the people in the district, the only ones who hate her and of whom she is in turn afraid, are these two (p. 297). On the previous page Gringoire speaks of her innocence, "ne sachant pas encore la différence d'une femme à un homme," and compares her to "une espèce de femme abeille, ayant des ailes invisibles aux pieds, et vivant dans un tourbillon" (p. 296).

Actually, the inevitability of La Esmeralda's death is revealed not so much in ordinary novelistic manner, but in poetic terms, expressed particularly by means of the spider-and-fly metaphor, perhaps hinted at in the quotation above. The metaphor is presented more definitely and significantly in the incident

which occurs during a conversation (which had previously concerned La Esmeralda) between Claude Frollo and Jacques Charmolue. Several sentences are devoted to the fact that a spider is about to attack a poor little fly. Charmolue reaches to save the innocent victim but is deterred by the priest:

L'archidiacre, comme réveillé en sursaut, lui retint le bras avec une violence convulsive.

--Maître Jacques, cria-t-il, laissez faire la fatalité! (p. 323)

This metaphor is reinforced when Esmeralda is thrown into prison and Hugo comments:

Pauvre mouche qui n'eût pu remuer le moindre de ses moellons!

Certes, la providence et la société avaient été également injustes, un tel luxe de malheur et de torture n'était pas nécessaire pour briser une si frêle créature. (p. 369)

The same metaphor is echoed immediately after La Esmeralda's last convulsions on the scaffold: "Le prêtre . . . contemplait ce groupe épouvantable de l'homme et de la jeune fille, de l'araignée et de la mouche" (p. 562). Thus Hugo has, from beginning to end, cast La Esmeralda in the role of victim: beautiful, innocent, and defenseless.

It will, of course, be impossible to treat in detail all of the two chapters which deal with La Esmeralda's death. On the other hand, one of the most striking characteristics of Hugo's dealing with the

subject is his use of melodrama, and this spreads over some forty-six pages. Therefore, certain important passages will be examined in detail while the salient factors in the rest will be summarized.

At the beginning of "Le Petit Soulier," La Esmeralda awakens to the din of the cathedral's being sacked. Her first premonition of tragedy comes on the next page: "Elle resta ainsi prosternée fort longtemps, tremblant, . . . ne comprenant rien à ce déchaînement, . . . mais pressentant une issue terrible" (p. 524). When Gringoire comes, ostensibly to rescue her, he is accompanied by "une figure noire et voilée de la tête aux pieds" (p. 524). Many times in the rest of this episode Hugo will refer to this figure, who is, of course, Claude Frollo, as "l'homme noir." He also compares him to a "spectre" and because of his "larges manches noires" to a "chauve-souris" (p. 527). When Gringoire deserts La Esmeralda, and she realizes that she is alone with Frollo, the terror mounts. Hugo presents her fears, for the most part, in physical terms and as action more often than description:

La pauvre égyptienne frissonna de se voir seule avec cet homme. Elle voulut parler, crier, appeler Gringoire, sa langue était inerte dans sa bouche, et aucun son ne sortit de ses lèvres. Tout à coup elle sentit la main de l'inconnu sur la sienne. C'était une main froide et forte. Ses dents claquèrent, elle

devint plus pâle que le rayon de lune qui l'éclairait. L'homme ne dit pas une parole. Il se mit à remonter à grands pas vers la place de Grève, en la tenant par la main. En cet instant, elle sentit vaguement que la destinée est une force irrésistible. Elle n'avait plus de ressort, elle se laissa entraîner, courant tandis qu'il marchait. (pp. 531-32)

Here La Esmeralda is clearly portrayed as the helpless victim of fate, but she is, of course, too limited to comprehend this more than "vaguement."

Most dramatically, his passions in constantly mounting turmoil, Frollo asks La Esmeralda to choose between himself and death: "La destinée nous livre l'un à l'autre. Je vais décider de ta vie; toi, de mon âme" (p. 533). Her answer comes at the end of a paragraph which is designed to form a tableau:

Elle s'arracha de ses mains et tomba au pied du gibet en embrassant cet appui funèbre. Puis elle tourna sa belle tête à demi, et regarda le prêtre par-dessus son épaule. On eût dit une sainte Vierge au pied de la croix. Le prêtre était demeuré sans mouvement, le doigt toujours levé vers le gibet, conservant son geste, comme une statue.

Enfin l'égyptienne lui dit: --Il me fait encore moins horreur que vous. (pp. 533-34)

This is undoubtedly our heroine's finest moment; her words are brave, dignified and scathing in their brevity and simplicity. Visually she is "belle," caught in a madonna-like attitude.

There follow three pages of monologue by the priest, exposing all his psychological problems.

Finally he physically throws himself upon the girl. She reacts instinctively, with less dignity than before but more naturally, taunting him with two insults which he cannot bear, that he is old and ugly and that it is Phoebus whom she loves. By using the name Phoebus, La Esmeralda seals her fate, for Frollo shouts: "Meurs donc!" (p. 537). He then hands her over to the recluse, Gudule, who inhabits the hut on the Place de Grève.

Earlier, as we have seen, Hugo expressed La Esmeralda's fears in physical terms. Now he makes a rare yet brief attempt to enter her mind as, captive of the horrible old hag, she contemplates death. This is the last such effort and occurs a short chronological time, but nineteen pages, before La Esmeralda mounts the scaffold:

Épuisée, elle retomba contre la muraille, et alors la crainte de la mort s'empara d'elle. Elle songea à la beauté de la vie, à la jeunesse, à la vue du ciel, aux aspects de la nature, à l'amour, à Phoebus, à tout ce qui s'enfuyait et à tout ce qui s'approchait, au prêtre qui la dénonçait, au bourreau qui allait venir, au gibet qui était là. Alors elle sentit l'épouvante lui monter jusque dans les racines des cheveux . . .
(pp. 537-38)

Here Hugo seems to be trying to reflect the simplicity of the young girl as he describes her thoughts on death. These thoughts are divided into two categories--her regrets, "tout ce qui s'enfuyait," and her fears, "tout

ce qui s'approchait." All of the former are quite appropriate, with the exception of "aux aspects de la nature," which seems to be more Hugo's feelings than La Esmeralda's. There is progress in both her regrets and her fears. She moves from the general "beauté de la vie" to the very specific love of Phoebus; balancing this, her troubled mind skips from the cause of her plight, the priest, to the one who will physically bring about her death, and finally to the actual mechanism of that death. "L'épouvante" then becomes a physical thing and, where it took hold of her in a general way at the beginning of the paragraph, it now mounts to the roots of her hair, creating a specific fear reaction familiar to most readers.

The foundation for the dramatic scene between La Esmeralda and Claude Frollo was carefully and artistically constructed throughout the novel. But Hugo has not satisfied his thirst for the dramatic: another long episode will take place on the Place de Grève, before the hanging can begin. For the modern reader this is pure melodrama, because of the various excesses and the unbelievable coincidence of Gudule's finding, by means of the baby shoe about the gypsy's neck, that her prisoner is her long-lost child. At the same time Hugo, like Chateaubriand in the preceding chapter, seems to be

consciously employing the Aristotelian elements of tragedy: recognition and reversal. Early in the scene, Gudule, holding on to La Esmeralda through the bars of her hovel, shouts: "Hah! hah! hah! tu vas être pendue!" (p. 538). On the next page, La Esmeralda pleads:

Madame! . . . ayez pitié. Ils viennent. Je ne vous ai rien fait. Voulez-vous me voir mourir de cette horrible façon sous vos yeux? . . . Laissez-moi me sauver. Lâchez-moi! Grâce. Je ne veux pas mourir comme cela!

At this point Gudule could have saved the girl, but this is before the recognition. Once recognition has taken place and Gudule knows that she is holding her daughter, the natural assumption is that she will let her go. But we must deal with another strong force before Gudule will recognize that the situation has reversed itself. That force is Mother Love. It will dominate Gudule's actions for the rest of the chapter and it manifests itself from the very beginning as being animal-like. Attempting to drag La Esmeralda into the hut with her, Gudule must break the bars:

Tout à coup, elle se releva, écarta ses longs cheveux gris de dessus son front, et sans dire une parole, se mit à ébranler de ses deux mains les barreaux de sa loge plus furieusement qu'une lionne. . . .

. . . . Le passage frayé, et il fallut moins d'une minute pour cela, elle saisit sa fille par le milieu du corps et la tira dans sa cellule. --Viens! que je te repêche de l'abîme! murmurait-elle. (pp. 540-41)

The irony, of course, is that she is doing the very opposite. There follow two pages of excessive physical and vocal expression of Gudule's joy, during which La Esmeralda says only: "Ma mère" (p. 542).

The pathos builds to its climax as the joyful mother concludes: "Nous allons être heureuses!" (p. 542). This statement is immediately followed by a rapid return to reality: "En ce moment la logette retentit d'un cliquetis d'armes et d'un galop de chevaux . . . " (p. 542-43). Gudule reacts with disbelief: "Ho! ho! non! c'est un rêve que tu me dis là. Ah! oui! je l'aurais perdue, cela aurait duré quinze ans, et puis je la retrouverais, et cela durerait une minute! . . . Le bon Dieu n'en permet pas comme cela" (p. 543). She recovers herself quickly, however, hides her daughter and begins a four-page exchange with Tristan l'Hermite and the other soldiers. This kangaroo court has all the drama of a Perry Mason courtroom, and is artfully handled by Hugo as his central characters waver between hope and despair. Just as Gudule has finally managed to convince the soldiers that she knows nothing of La Esmeralda's whereabouts, Captain Phoebus speaks, and the Gypsy girl becomes the victim of her own weakness when, recognizing his voice, she shouts the fatal words: "Phoebus! à moi, mon Phoebus!" (p. 548).

Five pages of violence follow, during which Gudule outwits the band of soldiers and makes them look ridiculous in their efforts to enter her hovel. All through this scene the animal-like quality of her mother love is emphasized. Hugo refers to her as "une mère tigresse" (p. 549). He compares her hands to "deux griffes" (p. 549); her physical attitude is "à quatre pattes comme une panthère" (p. 552); and he has one of the soldiers say of her: "Elle a une crinière de lion!" (p. 553). Then quite abruptly Gudule tries another tactic, showing for a page and a half the tender side of mother love, as she makes a moving but rational plea to Tristan and the soldiers.

Following this pathetic appeal is the passage of the actual beginning of the hanging, which we will now examine in detail. It opens with the intervention of Hugo, who is speaking of Gudule: "Nous n'essaierons pas de donner une idée de son geste, de son accent, . . . " (p. 555), and continues to the end of the chapter. Within this one remarkable sentence, Hugo does, of course, try to do just what he has said he will not do. Everything which he will not describe attaches either to "son geste" or "son accent." This is accomplished through the use of three dependent clauses in which he alternates between emphasis on one or the

other. The first item of which Hugo will not try to give an idea is "des larmes qu'elle buvait en parlant," which is both visual and auditive, and is consequently both "geste" and "accent." The second clause, "des mains qu'elle joignait et puis tordait," is all "geste." The third clause, considerably longer and more complicated, has five antecedents. Two are "gestes" (smiles and looks); the rest are "accents" (moans, sighs, and cries).

Though Hugo has announced that he will not try to give us an idea of all this, he chooses adjectives that will move us: "sourires navrants," "regards noyés." The smiles and looks give way to moans and sighs which build up finally to cries which are "misérables et saisissants," adjectives which both describe how the cries sound and give a measure of interpretation. The sentence ends with the last three of the seven adjectives used, "paroles désordonnées, folles et décousues." There is progression in these words from disorderly, to irrational, to utterly disconnected.

The second sentence gives us the reason that Hugo felt it unnecessary to describe Gudule's condition. The reaction of the hardened Tristan is the measure of the pathos of the situation. After the long first sentence, full of verbs in the imperfect to indicate that the noise went on for quite a while, one can almost

feel the silence as the two past definites begin the action: "Quand elle se tut, Tristan l'Hermite fronça le sourcil." Meantime a tear rolls in the eye of this "tigre." But the moment is brief and two more past definite verbs continue the action: "Il surmonta cette faiblesse et dit d'un ton bref: -- Le roi le veut." Hugo indicates that Tristan has to steel himself by going back to this higher authority for what he must do. His actions are further interpreted to show that he is moved by all that has taken place. Although he merely whispers to the hangman to finish quickly, which might mean almost anything, Hugo adds: "Le redoutable prévôt sentait peut-être le coeur lui manquer, à lui aussi." Thus Tristan remains as a "tigre" and the adjective "redoutable" accompanies him even in his softer moments, all for the purpose of showing just how strong is the appeal of the situation.

In the opening of the next paragraph the hangman and his men enter the lodging. Hugo makes a very simple statement of the fact. From here to the end of the chapter, in direct contrast to all the long drawn-out melodrama which has preceded, the action moves quite simply and directly to the actual hanging. This is accomplished by several means. The sentences are, for the most part, short. In a later paragraph three

sentences begin with adverbs: "alors," "alors" again, and "puis." The verbs, in general, are action verbs in the past definite. Returning to the entry by the soldiers into the lodging, we find that Gudule has now ceased to fight, but with her animal-like instincts she still tries to protect her child with her body. The verb "se traîner" and the expression "à corps perdu" adequately portray her actions. The first four sentences of this paragraph all begin with the definite article and seem to advance the action by naming the several elements of the situation and the horror which close in on La Esmeralda. The Egyptian's reaction is simple, normal, understandable. Hugo makes no attempt to enter her mind. Her tone of distress is "inexprimable," as Hugo again uses the stylistic trick of pretending to be unable to set down in words the horror of it all. She who has never known a mother until the last few moments reverts to being a child as she cries: "Ma mère! . . . ils viennent! défendez-moi!" The mother comforts her with a voice "éteinte," in marked contrast to the screams of a moment before. Hugo finishes the paragraph by injecting himself into the situation: "Toutes deux ainsi à terre, la mère sur la fille, faisaient un spectacle de pitié." This sentence, reminiscent of Diderot's theatrical tableaux, shows how Hugo is

deliberately creating a visual picture.

Hugo continues to appeal to the reader's emotions in the paragraph which follows. La Esmeralda evidently has her eyes closed, for her first realization that Henriette Cousin is picking her up comes through her sense of touch. She feels his hand under her shoulders, Hugo reminding us of their beauty by the adjective "belles." The hangman, hard, tough cruel man that he would have to be, is not merely misty-eyed, but large tears are falling from his eyes. As a further example of the visual quality of this paragraph, the large tears are falling drop by drop. Meanwhile the author emphasizes how firmly Gudule is physically attached to her daughter: Henriette Cousin "essaya de détacher la mère"; "essaya" indicates that he was unsuccessful; "détacher" that she was indeed attached. She has entwined her arms about her daughter's waist (pour ainsi dire noué), and later, when her arms are removed from La Esmeralda, the verb used is "dénouer." Gudule herself is "cramponnée," which is strong enough in itself, but Hugo has modified the adjective with "puissamment." While the hangman "essaya" in the first half of the sentence, he ends by finding it "impossible de l'en séparer" in the second half. Thus in one sentence nearly every word which Hugo has used is

deliberately chosen to show the superhuman force of the old hag's mother love. At the end of the paragraph Henriette Cousin drags them both from the hut, and into the sight, incidentally, of those who might be watching from Notre-Dame. But this fact will not come out until later.

There is now a break in the action, with the rising of the sun, in the first sentence of the next paragraph. Again one has the impression of the theater as the lights suddenly go up and illuminate a larger scene. The first thing that one sees is a group of people "qui regardait à distance ce qu'on traînait ainsi sur le pavé vers le gibet" (p. 555). Thus the eye goes from the pitiful mass of humanity being dragged to the gallows, to the crowd standing around in the background. Their distance is explained in the next sentence, the author using Tristan l'Hermite's alleged mania for keeping crowds at a distance as a means of making the central action completely visible. Hugo continues: "Il n'y avait personne aux fenêtres" (p. 556). Now the eye has moved quite naturally, as the sun fills the area, from the crowd at a distance to the windows above the crowd. Looking even higher than the windows: "On voyait seulement de loin, au sommet de celle des tours de Notre-Dame qui domine la Grève, deux hommes

détachés en noir sur le ciel clair du matin, qui semblaient regarder" (p. 556). This is the sentence which the Garnier edition states was added by Hugo (p. 595). Artistically it is very necessary, along with the reference to the sun, in order to make, in the next chapter, the transition to the cathedral, from which we will witness the final moments of La Esmeralda's life. The two silhouettes, "détachés en noir," also lend an ominous touch to this very visual scene.

The action begins again in the next paragraph with Henriot Cousin resuming his disagreeable task. To contrast with great economy what Cousin does (putting the rope around La Esmeralda's neck) with what he simultaneously feels, Hugo uses the participle, "respirant à peine," modified by its complement, "tant la chose l'apitoyait." This is the second direct use of the word pity by Hugo in the passage. The two adjectives used in the sentence, "fatale échelle," and "cou adorable" can hardly be referred to as objective. Again La Esmeralda feels rather than sees the horror, in this case the hemp of the hanging rope. The choice of the word "chanyre," with its connotations of roughness, immediately after "cou adorable," is particularly effective. The adjectives again, however, are somewhat

unsubtle: "malheureuse enfant" and "horrible attouchement." For some time La Esmeralda's eyes have been shut and now when she raises them, with difficulty, for the verb is "soulever," what she sees is indeed horrible. Hugo uses metaphor for the first time in this passage, a strong indication that he is instead focusing on the action and the drama. La Esmeralda's eyes fall on the "bras décharné du gibet de pierre," the personification of the gallows and their fleshlessness contributing with artistry to the horror. Her scream is "déchirante," another melodramatic adjective; her words are childlike and pathetic: "Non, non, je ne veux pas!" The mother reacts wordlessly from her position still so firmly attached to the daughter that her head is "enfouie et perdue" in La Esmeralda's clothes. But the witnesses, indicated by the indefinite pronoun "on," both see Gudule's body quiver and hear her kisses. Taking advantage of the mother's emotional diversion, the hangman pries loose her arms. After the struggle of an entire chapter, her final surrender is sudden. It is expressed in a very compact sentence by Hugo and is interpreted as the result of either "épuisement" (physical cause) or "désespoir" (mental cause). The last two sentences of the paragraph are entirely visual, perhaps because it is this sight which Quasimodo and

Frollo will see from Notre-Dame. Again, even in such extremity, La Esmeralda remains "la charmante créature," and she is not merely slung over the hangman's shoulder but falls "gracieusement pliée," thus maintaining to the end the contrast of beauty and horror.

For the last long paragraph of this passage, Hugo's camera focuses again on the mother, "accroupie sur le pavé." When her eyes open and she sees her daughter being carried up the ladder, her actions are swift and again animal-like. The suddenness is emphasized by the fact that she goes so quickly from her lifeless position on the ground to the act of biting the hangman, with the agility and instinct of a beast seizing its prey (a comparison which Hugo has been creating ever since Gudule finished her last long speech). The verb "se jeter" and the following sentence also reinforce the idea of quickness, the element of surprise contributing to the drama: "Ce fut un éclair" (p. 556). Again she is silent ("sans jeter un cri"), reflecting the emotional state in which she has been since abandoning all hope. Hugo, who uses "jeter" twice in this sentence for no artistically discernible purpose, could perhaps have substituted another verb for the first one but not for the second. The rest of the paragraph advances in short staccato

sentences, with no interpretive comments or adjectives. The savagery of Gudule's bite is conveyed by the reaction of the hangman who "hurle de douleur," and by the fact that they were only able to "retirer avec peine" the hand which is "sanglante" from her teeth. The indefinite pronoun "on" (probably the sergeants) is brought into the narrative again and is the subject of five action verbs. Knowledge of the fact of Gudule's death is held off until the sentence in which it is announced. "Elle se laissa de nouveau retomber" cleverly maintains the idea that she is still somewhat in control of herself. Thus the simple explanatory sentence which completes the paragraph falls with great drama, made up both of the surprise of the announcement and the pity which has been carefully built up: "C'est qu'elle était morte" (p. 556). The passage and the chapter close with the camera's picture fading out on the hangman as he remounts the ladder, indicating that action will proceed toward its inevitable end.

The next chapter, entitled "La Creatura Bella Bianco Vestita" (a quotation from Dante's description of the angel of humility in his Purgatory), begins with several pages of flashback to recount Quasimodo's intervening actions. After some time the hunchback comes upon Claude Frollo: "Le Prêtre, dont les yeux

plongeaient sur la ville, avait la poitrine appuyée à celui des quatre côtés de la balustrade qui regarde le Pont Notre-Dame" (p. 560). Hugo stops at this point to describe in a beautiful paragraph just what the priest might be seeing through eyes which do not merely look but plunge into the Paris below. This is but one of many descriptions in the novel of the view from Notre-Dame, but it is unusual in its brevity and poetry. Here the author's second camera takes in the complete surrounding scene, being careful not to miss the beauty which contrasts so sharply with the ugliness of the action. Hugo begins by stating that the view from Notre-Dame, especially in the old days, when seen under the specific circumstances of the fresh light of a summer dawn is "magnifique et charmant" (p. 560). Of the things he describes, the sky, stars, river and horizon (nature), would seem to refer to the "magnifique," and the noises of waking Paris (man), to "charmant." He is, throughout the paragraph, concerned with one or the other and especially with the effects of light and shadow over all. Examples of light are the fading stars, the one very brilliant star, the sun about to rise, and the daylight which is both "très blanche et très pure." This last light brings to the eye one of the silhouettes of which the author is so fond, in this case the surface

of the roofs. Their rapid appearance is made manifest by "faisait saillir vivement à l'oeil," and ties in with the same phenomenon as it took place in the previous chapter, the sudden flooding of light at sunrise. With the daylight comes the giant shadow of the bell towers. The river is both light and dark, "moirée" with silver. There is a slight personification of the Seine, who gathers together her waters at the bridge arches, the resulting folds being silvered. The eye, which has wandered from the serene sky to the rooftops to the river below, perhaps following the river, moves on outside the town's ramparts, to the indefinite silhouette of the hills and plains.

Interspersed with the descriptions of nature itself are sentences devoted to the human element in Paris as seen at dawn. The first such insertion is logical, following the statement that the sun is about to appear: "Paris commençait à remuer." A few sentences later, Hugo continues: "Il y avait déjà des quartiers qui parlaient et qui faisaient du bruit." It is interesting to note the interior rhyme of this sentence and the number of noisy "k" sounds in the next one as the poet in Hugo takes over the description, choosing three specific early morning noises: "coup de cloche," "coup de marteau," and "cliquetis compliqué d'une

charette en marche." He then makes the transition from the human back to the natural elements of the scene and from the auditory to the visual by showing the smoke rising from the rooftops "comme par les fissures d'une immense solfatare." The smoke eventually mingles with the "vapeurs floconneuses" on the horizon, fuses with the "rumeurs flottantes" (thus combining the visual and the auditory), and ultimately develops into the beautiful metaphor of the final sentence: "Vers l'orient le vent du matin chassait à travers le ciel quelques blanches ouates arrachées à la toison de brume des collines" (p. 561). It is noteworthy that nature, as in "Tristesse d'Olympio," in no way reflects the tragedy which is about to take place.

The next two paragraphs return to the drama, the first being a sort of transition to the present state of affairs as it describes the Parvis after the violent events of the night before. Then, returning to the tower, Hugo points out two separate phenomena. Below the priest there are two wallflowers in bloom in a crack in the drainpipe. The flowers are hard to ignore, we are made to realize, not simply because they are "jolies" but because of their movement and personification: " . . . deux jolies giroflées en fleur, secouées et rendues comme vivantes par le souffle de l'air, se

faissent des salutations folâtres" (p. 561). Above there are birds singing.

A third paragraph, with the camera eye fixed solely on the priest, begins significantly with "mais," and continues through a series of negatives. "Mais le prêtre n'écoutait, ne regardait rien de tout cela" (p. 561). "Tout cela" would include presumably all the noises of Paris and the birds in the tower which he did not hear and all the great vista and flowers which he did not see. Continuing the negatives, Hugo explains, by enumerating three selected things which do not exist for him ("matins," "oiseaux," "fleurs") that Frollo ignores that which the author has just laid before him so magnificently. His attention is not on the very general with which the preceding paragraphs have been concerned, "cet immense horizon," but on one "point unique," which will be the focal point of the paragraphs to come.

"Quasimodo brûlait de lui demander ce qu'il avait fait de l'égyptienne" (p. 561). It will take Quasimodo four paragraphs to find the answer and to arrive at the agonizing sentence: "C'était elle." The first paragraph is concerned with the emotional state in which Quasimodo finds his master and the fear and respect which he still retains for the priest. The

next sentence is an example of Hugo's genius for narrative. It occurs very naturally and is made logical by all that we know about Quasimodo's deafness and the location of the two men on the cathedral; it is made tragic by what we know is actually going on down below: "Seulement, et c'était encore une manière d'interroger l'archidiacre, il suivit la direction de son rayon visuel, et de cette façon le regard du malheureux sourd tomba sur la place de Grève" (pp. 561-62). In a previous sentence Hugo referred to Quasimodo as "le sauvage sonneur," capable of great acts of strength and violence, yet fearful of this one man. In this sentence he is "le malheureux sourd," an object of pity. The establishment of "le rayon visuel" will be of subsequent importance.

The gradual revelation of the truth to Quasimodo comes at first in short, simple sentences. Hugo seems to enter the mind of the hunchback as he assimilates one fact after another. But to the reader, each fact has a long background, carefully established in the preceding chapter. This stylistic device enables Hugo to use the language of Quasimodo's mind and yet maintain all the impact of each object down below: "L'échelle était dressée près du gibet permanent. Il y avait quelque peuple dans la place et beaucoup de

soldats" (p. 562). We see the outer form, as it looks to Quasimodo (and the distance camera) of "une chose blanche à laquelle une chose noire était accrochée." Then to prolong the revelation: "Ici se passa quelque chose que Quasimodo ne vit pas bien." The author intervenes to explain why, but he is completely cold and detached, an attitude he can afford to maintain because he has built his situation so carefully. We discover the identity of the "on" of the last chapter, "un gros de soldats qui empêchait de distinguer tout." Again, as at the same point in "Le Petit Soulier," the sun bursts through: "D'ailleurs en cet instant le soleil parut, et un tel flot de lumière déborda par-dessus l'horizon qu'on eût dit que toutes les pointes de Paris, flèches, cheminées, pignons, prenaient feu à la fois." In this marvelous and rhythmical sentence one can certainly see the stage lights come on in full force creating a fiery brilliance comparable to torches on the arrows of the soldiers and the rooftops. The suddenness is indicated by "en cet instant," "le soleil parut," and "à la fois"; that it is a crescendo of light by "un tel flot de lumière" and "déborda."

The action that is hidden from Quasimodo is the biting incident and the affixing of the knot around La Esmeralda's neck. After the descriptive sentences

involving the sunrise, Hugo returns to his stark, factual technique. The process of closing in on the scene and its significance continues: Quasimodo sees the man, the ladder, a woman on the man's shoulder; then more specifically a young girl, dressed in white, a rope around her neck. "Quasimodo la reconnut. C'était elle." Despite the poignancy of this moment, Hugo lets it have its own effect and continues the narrative. There is a brief reference to the priest so that we do not forget his presence or his physical vulnerability as he kneels on the balustrade.

In the next paragraph new action begins with the hanging, and this distant view is the only one we will have of the actual event. With three sentences the author gives a visual impression of all four characters involved in the scene: "Tout à coup l'homme repoussa brusquement l'échelle du talon . . . " (p. 562). This is the third reference to the hangman, not as Henriot Cousin or even as the hangman, but simply as "l'homme," which seems to be an indication that we are seeing only that which Quasimodo can see and identify. We are given only a glimpse of the two men on the tower, but it is sufficient--Quasimodo does not breathe, while he sees this and that. We are not told but we might assume that he watches in a state of shock. Claude

Frollo is no less mesmerized as he watches "ce groupe épouvantable de l'homme et de la jeune fille, de l'araignée et de la mouche." The ultimate statement of the sustained spider-fly metaphor makes clearer than ever that La Esmeralda is a predestined victim. The sentence fragments devoted to the heroine are realistic and graphic. Hugo does add, however, the interpretive words "la malheureuse enfant." The realism and the visual quality continue in the following sentence: "La corde fit plusieurs tours sur elle-même, et Quasimodo vit courir d'horribles convulsions le long du corps de l'égyptienne." Here the adjective "horrible" seems objective, considering the circumstances.

If we resume our analogy of the movie camera, Hugo here seems to employ the recent technique of making the camera flash in quick sequence from one object to another. In the first sentence we see the hangman push aside the ladder; then Quasimodo who does not breathe; at the end of the rope "la malheureuse enfant"; finally her feet dangling on the hangman's shoulders. In two more sentences the camera moves from the rope to Quasimodo, to La Esmeralda's body, to the priest, to the gallows once more. Hugo accomplishes this facile movement from tower to gallows by alternately describing, at close hand, the men themselves

and by narrating what they themselves see, availing himself freely of their strongly established "rayon visuel."

There is a sudden change in the beginning of the next paragraph as Frollo, "au moment où c'était le plus effroyable," gives forth a horrible laugh. The silence remains unbroken, however, for the scene is maintained from Quasimodo's point of view. The laugh is seen rather than heard: " . . . un rire qu'on ne peut avoir que lorsqu'on n'est plus homme, éclata sur le visage livide du prêtre. Quasimodo n'entendit pas ce rire, mais il le vit" (p. 562). Again Hugo will call him "le sonneur," perhaps recalling his use of that word in the earlier paragraph where Quasimodo was still intimidated by the priest. But it is in this capacity, with the brute strength of "le sonneur," that Quasimodo suddenly takes over the action: "Le sonneur recula"; "se ruant sur lui avec fureur"; "il le poussa." The silence is broken as the priest screams "Damnation!" and falls, but the eerie stillness, the world of Quasimodo, will dominate the remaining action of the chapter.

Most of the next three pages is devoted to the fall of the priest. It is a long, spine-tingling, realistic, appropriate end for Claude Frollo. But

even as this violent action occurs in the tower, we are never allowed to forget the greater tragedy which is taking place below. Interspersed in all the nightmarish fall from Notre-Dame are these sentences concerning Quasimodo: "Quasimodo n'eût eu pour le tirer du gouffre qu'à lui tendre la main, mais il ne le regardait seulement pas. Il regardait la Grève. Il regardait le gibet. Il regardait l'égyptienne" (p. 563). (Again are we not reminded of the focusing camera as it narrows down the scene?) "Tandis que l'archidiacre à quelques pieds de lui agonisait de cette horrible façon, Quasimodo pleurait et regardait la Grève" (p. 564). And twice later, on the same page, Hugo ends paragraphs with "Quasimodo qui pleurait," and "Quasimodo pleurait." Only when Frollo actually falls does Quasimodo notice: "Quasimodo le regarda tomber" (p. 565). The repetition of the verbs "regarder" and "pleurer," characterizing Quasimodo's actions as unvarying during these moments of trauma, is most effective.

The last paragraph of the chapter and the last view of the dying heroine consists of one sentence. With remarkable economy, always more effective because of the contrast with the stream of words to which we have become accustomed, Hugo creates a highly visual scene, combines his three central characters who are

physically separated by some distance, and points up the terrible tragedy of the situation. Again the matter of perspective is important. Quasimodo is still on the tower. To see La Esmeralda on the gallows he "releva son oeil," for she is farther away than the priest who lies directly below and upon whom he "rebaissa" his eye. There is strong parallel between the two situations. The eye falls upon La Esmeralda and what Quasimodo sees is "le corps": she is already dead. The eye falls upon "l'archidiacre" who no longer has "forme humaine." One is "suspendu"; the other is "étendu." Again the description of La Esmeralda is realistic as her body quivers with "des derniers tressaillements de l'agonie," but this occurs under her "robe blanche," symbol of her innocence, beauty and victimization. The scene closes, however, not with the camera on the heroine but on Quasimodo, who dies emotionally as he tragically utters: "Oh! tout ce que j'ai aimé!" (p. 565).

The novel itself ends with a chapter entitled "Mariage de Quasimodo" (p. 567). Keeping this title in mind, we will consider briefly the last paragraph which is written in simple, journalistic style, telling only the facts. The reader, armed with the title as special insurance that he will not miss the point, sees

the pathos for himself. To lend credence to the ending, Hugo begins by introducing a plausible historical reason for anyone's having entered the Montfaucon burial vault (p. 568). As a matter of natural curiosity those who did so were intrigued by "deux squelettes dont l'un tenait l'autre singulièrement embrassé" (p. 569). The two are briefly described: the woman in terms of "quelques lambeaux de robe d'une étoffe qui avait été blanche" and "un collier de grains d'adrézarach avec un petit sachet de soie, orné de verroterie verte, qui était ouvert et vide." Here we have only the pathetic: the once-white dress and the jewelry which, though once so valuable to its owner, is now wanted by no one. The real interest is in the bones of the man--they indicate first of all that he was deformed, probably hunchbacked. But more fascinating is the fact that the neck is unbroken, giving rise to the idea that he must have come to this final resting spot of his own accord. Knowing Quasimodo as we do, such an action seems as logical as it does tragic, and if the end is melodramatic it is nonetheless powerful. Nor are we surprised that when separated from the bones of his beloved La Esmeralda, "il tomba en poussière."

It takes Hugo approximately forty-six pages, in the Garnier edition, to tell the story of La Esmeralda's

death. For the most part it is told, not in terms of the gypsy girl herself, but in terms of three other characters--Claude Frollo, Gudule, and Quasimodo. In other words, La Esmeralda is the center of attraction but not the center of interest. She is an object, a victim, a symbol, about which other more interesting characters revolve. This is partially explainable because of the fact that she is not the protagonist, and yet Hugo writes page after page about Gudule who is not even a central character. Similarly, the priest and the devoted, simple-minded Quasimodo receive considerably more attention, even during her final death scene, than does La Esmeralda.

If one were to choose one adjective to describe Hugo's treatment of the hanging of La Esmeralda and the events leading up to that moment, that word would have to be "dramatic." Often the dramatic is too melodramatic for modern tastes. However, the fine line between these two adjectives is a matter which varies greatly from individual to individual and certainly from period to period. The drama is produced in many ways: character delineation, particularly in the case of the men; constant attention to rendering visual both the action which is taking place and the large canvas against which it occurs; and careful plot con-

struction to insure mounting tensions, surprises, and reversals. There is a never-ending attempt to arouse pity in the heart of the readers, sometimes done quite powerfully and at other times directly and without subtlety. There seems little doubt that, particularly in the climax of his novel, Hugo was trying to introduce the special qualities of the tragic drama into another genre. He is perhaps carrying out his suggestions made in 1823 in his review of Quentin Durward:

"Supposons donc qu'au roman narratif, . . . supposons qu'au roman épistolaire, dont la forme même interdit toute véhémence et toute rapidité, un esprit créateur substitue le roman dramatique . . ." ²

The variation between the overstated and the understated seems also to be a strong characteristic of Hugo's style as it manifests itself in the particular passages considered in this chapter. His changes of pace, alternating between verbosity and economy, often have great effect. Although the modern reader grows weary of the long monologues and over-emotional scenes, he must admit that the strength of the very simple lines, when they occur, has its origin in all that has gone before.

²La Muse Française, I, 31-32.

One can hardly read Hugo without looking for the contrasts for which he is so well known, and the passages considered here are, as one would expect, rich in this respect. There is the contrast of the ugly and the beautiful: Quasimodo/La Esmeralda; Frollo/La Esmeralda; Gudule/La Esmeralda; the hangman/La Esmeralda. There is the beauty of the Paris morning and the ugliness of men's actions. There is the ugliness of Quasimodo's body and the beauty of his devotion. Throughout the scene there is a constant attention to light and darkness, made particularly striking by the time of day which Hugo has chosen. The whiteness of La Esmeralda's dress and the darkness of the priest are greatly emphasized. In addition to the simple black-white contrasts cited above, there are also instances of a more complex sort of opposition (paradox). Examples are: "cet appui funèbre" [le gibet] (p. 534), "une tenaille intelligente" (p. 537), "un sourire navrant" (p. 555).

The lyric qualities which one might also expect to find in Hugo's writing are, in this case, made subservient to the dramatic. The passage describing the view from Notre-Dame and certain isolated sentences are quite poetic, but are an exception to the characteristics of the rest of the death passage. The use

of metaphor, so prevalent in the remainder of the novel, is also quite limited in this portion. In addition to the important but brief spider-fly metaphor for La Esmeralda there are animal comparisons for Frollo and especially for Gudule.

The dramatic qualities of these passages and the contrasts within them were admittedly anticipated before examination, but the matter of perspective, which Hugo handles with great genius, became apparent only through close observation. The analogy of the camera explaining Hugo's technique may be somewhat artificial, but it does serve to show the complexity of his use of perspective. Indeed it does not seem an exaggeration to state that it is the delicate handling of perspective which is the unifying factor of the various passages which relate the death of La Esmeralda.

V. MADAME BOVARY

When we come to consider the death of Emma Bovary, we must first of all take into consideration the fact that it does not result from external causes, as did Manon's, from exposure, nor as did La Esmeralda's, from hanging. It is, instead, a suicide. And although self-administered poisoning is involved, the act is very different from the same act as committed by the Indian maid, Atala. Since Emma Bovary's death is a suicide, to understand it we must look for its causes. As we search for the underlying reasons for our heroine's unhappiness and the subsequent taking of her own life, we will discover what Flaubert considers to be her basic problem. For in Emma Bovary, he has created a self-centered heroine, nurtured in the Romantic literature of her time, yet confronted in her daily life with a deadly provincialism. Her inability to reconcile the real and the preconceived ideal is the root of her maladjustment, and the unmasking of this problem provides Flaubert with the opportunity both to ridicule the sentimental literature and to expose its actual dangers to an intellectually limited, sensual personality.

Since we know that Flaubert is an extremely careful writer, we would expect to find incidents related to the eventual suicide throughout the novel, and such is indeed the case. However, this is not done with a heavy hand. Our first glimpse of Emma Bovary occurs during the period of Charles' courtship. This view is entirely external and through it Flaubert conveys that although Emma is not beautiful she does have lovely eyes and a sensual appeal to men. As early as the courtship days the word "ennui" appears;¹ and a little later, Emma's thwarted desire to have a midnight wedding, by torchlight, is the first indication of her romantic leanings. Otherwise, she does not appear to be in any way unusual.

A flashback technique employed by Flaubert enables the author to enter the mind of his heroine just after the honeymoon, as disappointment in married life brings forth reflections on her girlhood. By means of a short but important passage concerning her life at the convent, we see Emma as a sensual, impressionable

¹Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, ed. by Christian Gauss (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p. 27. All subsequent references to Madame Bovary in my text will be to this edition and page numbers will be indicated within parentheses.

girl, eager to try everything but lacking in persistence and self-discipline (p. 41). Flaubert then goes into great detail concerning her reading matter, listing by name Paul et Virginie and Le Génie du christianisme. He also refers to her delight in Sir Walter Scott and her familiarity with "des femmes illustres ou infortunées" such as Jeanne d'Arc, Héloïse, Agnès Sorel and Clémence Isaure (p. 43). Although some of her reading was of Romantic classics, a great deal of it consisted of sentimental novels smuggled in by an old woman who worked at the convent. Flaubert makes it quite clear that Emma was attracted, not by the beautiful landscapes of Romantic literature ("elle connaissait trop la campagne"), but by the sensual appeal of the stories and their accompanying illustrations: "Il fallait qu'elle pût retirer des choses une sorte de profit personnel; et elle rejetait comme inutile tout ce qui ne contribuait pas à la consommation immédiate de son coeur, --étant de tempérament plus sentimental qu'artiste, cherchant des émotions et non des paysages" (p. 42). For Emma the result of such reading, given her intellectual limitations, was the formulation of an ideal which Flaubert expresses in the same construction which he will use in three later incidents involving a desire for escape or death: "Elle aurait voulu [*italics mine*] vivre dans

own, one that approximates and nourishes her romantic notions about what life should be. A certain Vicomte dances with her, and from this moment on he passes intermittently through her life as a shadowy symbol of the ideal man. The return to the humdrum existence at Tostes brings on Emma's first depression, which is not particularly eased by subsequent pregnancy and motherhood.

Emma's thirst for some satisfying experience must eventually lead to love outside marriage, and Flaubert is careful to show the role of Emma's reading in this quest. When she meets Léon, the young clerk, they are immediately attracted to each other in a cliché-filled conversation about literature, nature and music. A physically innocent love grows up between them; Léon is a constant visitor in the household and Emma appears to seize the opportunity to play the part of Julie de Wolmar (though Flaubert does not actually state this). Her outburst of domesticity and motherliness, however, seems to substantiate such a possibility. During this period she seeks help from M. Bournisien, the priest, but there is no more communication possible with him than with Charles. Léon's leaving for Paris causes her second serious depression.

Although Emma finds temporary happiness in her

quelque vieux manoir, comme ces châtelaines au long corsage, qui, sous le trèfle des ogives, passaient leurs jours, le coude sur la pierre et le menton dans la main, à regarder venir du fond de la campagne un cavalier à plume blanche qui galope sur un cheval noir" (p. 43). For the rest of her life Emma will measure her real experiences against her impressions of what life should be, as garnered from her convent reading, and each experience will be another disappointment, in a series of disappointments, as it fails to meet her sentimental standards.

The honeymoon is the first such experience. With her somewhat limited mind she reasons that something must be wrong with the setting or the costumes as she considers how much better it would have been "dans un cottage écossais, avec un mari vêtu d'un habit de velours noir à longues basques" (p. 47). Soon the only respect which Emma maintains for her husband concerns his medical ability, and even this is lost in the unfortunate affair of the operation on Hippolyte. Her immediate reaction is to begin planning to run away with her first lover.

The one great event in Emma's early married life is the ball at Vaubyessard. This experience gives her a glimpse of a much more exciting life than her

own, one that approximates and nourishes her romantic notions about what life should be. A certain Vicomte dances with her, and from this moment on he passes intermittently through her life as a shadowy symbol of the ideal man. The return to the humdrum existence at Tostes brings on Emma's first depression, which is not particularly eased by subsequent pregnancy and motherhood.

Emma's thirst for some satisfying experience must eventually lead to love outside marriage, and Flaubert is careful to show the role of Emma's reading in this quest. When she meets Léon, the young clerk, they are immediately attracted to each other in a cliché-filled conversation about literature, nature and music. A physically innocent love grows up between them; Léon is a constant visitor in the household and Emma appears to seize the opportunity to play the part of Julie de Wolmar (though Flaubert does not actually state this). Her outburst of domesticity and motherliness, however, seems to substantiate such a possibility. During this period she seeks help from M. Bournisien, the priest, but there is no more communication possible with him than with Charles. Léon's leaving for Paris causes her second serious depression.

Although Emma finds temporary happiness in her

two love affairs, each is followed by great disillusionment. With characteristic sensuality, the first thing that Emma notices about Rodolphe Boulanger is his green velvet frock coat. Boulanger is a realist and man of the world, but he is sufficiently intuitive to sense that he must seduce Emma through her romantic ideals: " . . . le devoir c'est de sentir ce qui est grand, de chérir ce qui est beau, et non pas d'accepter toutes les conventions de la société, . . . " (p. 168). Once Emma has yielded to Rodolphe she contemplates the happiness which will be hers:

Alors elle se rappela les héroïnes des livres qu'elle avait lus, et la légion lyrique de ces femmes adultères se mit à chanter dans sa mémoire avec des voix de soeurs qui la charmaient. Elle devenait elle-même comme une partie véritable de ces imaginations et réalisait la longue rêverie de sa jeunesse, en se considérant dans ce type d'amoureuse qu'elle avait tant envié. (pp. 190-91)

This quotation shows quite clearly Emma's tendency to act out a role. Following the inevitable breaking off of the affair with Rodolphe, Emma suffers a third depression and seeks solace in a very sensual approach to religion: " . . . elle adressait au Seigneur les mêmes paroles de suavité qu'elle murmurait jadis à son amant, dans les épanchements de l'adultère" (p. 251). Both characteristics, role-acting and sensuality, as illustrated separately in the last two quotations,

will appear again in the scene of Extreme Unction.

The second affair with Léon runs a longer and more lurid course than the one with Rodolphe; it begins when they accidentally meet again at the theater, Charles having taken Emma to see Lucie de Lammermoor. Before the encounter with Léon takes place, Emma, identifying herself with the heroine, "aurait voulu, fuyant la vie, s'envoler dans une étreinte" (p. 261). This desire for escape, expressed as "Emma aurait voulu" will be repeated twice later, each time with deeper conviction. But, temporarily at least, Léon and Emma, both romantics, find great joy in each other, quoting Lamartine as they assume their respective roles. But the ecstasy does not endure; Léon's friends urge him to break off the affair which threatens his career, and Emma "retrouvait dans l'adultère toutes les platitudes du mariage" (p. 339). In addition to the problems with Léon, Emma has money problems which become so pressing that Flaubert says of her: "Elle aurait voulu ne plus vivre, ou continuellement dormir" (p. 339). Whereas the first such statement was merely a desire for escape, this one incorporates a death wish. A little later, after a particularly degrading evening spent with Léon in the cafés, her wish seems to be to find refuge in some purer land, even beyond death:

"Elle aurait voulu, s'échappant comme un oiseau, aller se rajeunir quelque part, bien loin, dans les espaces immaculés" (p. 341).

Thus far we have been primarily concerned with the gradual disintegration of Emma's character, as caused by her sensuality and the constant gap which she finds between life as she envisions it and the reality which she must live. The constant deepening of her emotional problems and the steady worsening of her moral outlook are symptoms of this disintegration. But there is a parallel progress in her involvement in a very practical economic difficulty. Shortly after surrendering herself to Rodolphe, Emma is visited by the unscrupulous merchant, Lheureux, and she begins the unfortunate practice of buying from him on credit. The financial entanglement grows as Emma acquires more and more luxuries ("toutes les somptuosités terrestres" of the unction scene [p. 378]) and assumes the cost of the rendezvous in Rouen. Lheureux tightens the financial net about his easy prey with great skill. At length the two pressures, that of the crumbling love affair and that of the mounting debt, converge on Emma simultaneously. Arriving home from her most miserable meeting with Léon, she finds a notice of seizure on all their belongings if payment is not made in twenty-four

hours.

Up to this point in the study of Emma, we have been concerned with the underlying causes of the unhappiness which contributed to her eventual suicide. But from this moment of the Judgment (p. 341) we begin to encounter the immediate causes of the tragedy. Emma turns first to all her rational resources. In rapid succession she pleads with M. Lheureux, the bankers in Rouen, and finally Léon, but all to no avail. The failure to find help in Rouen is made even more bitter by two experiences there: Emma sees in a passing carriage the Vicomte, symbol of that world to which she was never admitted; there is also a revolting scene with "l'Aveugle," the miserable creature who has marred her previous visits to Rouen, and who will later figure so prominently in her dying moments.

After her arrival at home in Yonville, Emma continues to appeal to rational sources of aid, again without success. Finally, her situation desperate, she considers telling Charles. This is her most reasonable course of action and, had she followed it, things might have been resolved differently. But the idea of Charles' forgiving her, which she knows is inevitable, is so distasteful that she promptly rejects it. When she hears the sounds of Charles' horse returning, she

runs away, and from this point on she acts like a frightened animal in flight. Irrationally she goes to Binet, the tax collector, and to Mère Rolet, the wet-nurse. Here she becomes somewhat confused for the first time, a confusion which deepens when she realizes that Léon is not keeping his appointment to come to her aid. Finally she runs distractedly through the countryside to seek out her old lover Rodolphe, and it is with this event that Flaubert begins the death chapter. Emma prostitutes herself to Rodolphe, but when it comes to the question of a loan he refuses her.

Once outside Rodolphe's chateau, Emma becomes temporarily deranged and a psychological change comes over her. She loses sight of the real reason for her plight, the pursuit of her creditors, and substitutes instead that of love scorned, a cause of anguish more suitable to her romantic disposition. Following a brief moment of pure delirium, Emma becomes somewhat more lucid: "Alors sa situation, telle qu'un abîme, se représenta" (p. 366). Suddenly she makes her fatal decision to take the arsenic, and her subsequent action is characterized by its directness of purpose, from the first indication to its moment of accomplishment:

Puis, dans un transport d'héroïsme qui la rendait presque joyeuse, elle descendit la côte en courant, traversa la planche aux vaches, le

sentier, l'allée, les halles, et arriva devant la boutique du pharmacien.

.....
 Puis elle s'en retourna subitement
 apaisée, et presque dans la sérénité d'un
 devoir accompli. (pp. 366-67)

In the Scribner edition Flaubert devotes thirteen and one-half pages to the time between the moment Emma takes the arsenic and her actual death. Of these pages only the last three will be considered in minute detail, for they make up the death scene proper. However, it is interesting to observe, in a general manner, how Flaubert handles the entire episode. At some time between six and eight in the evening, Emma takes to her bed in anticipation of the death which does not come for a good many hours. Flaubert, realist that he is purported to be, does not make clear the exact time of the end. Throughout most of the pages describing the terrible night, Emma, lying on her death bed and suffering the progressive effects of the arsenic, is the focal point. But there are three interruptions during this scene which not only change the background of the action but inject an entirely different mood into the writing. These interruptions are full of ironic humor as they recount, for the most part, the peripheral actions during Emma's night of horror. Why did Flaubert insert them? One can only guess, of course, but the

most obvious reason would be that he was trying to establish the realism of the death itself. For as is the case in any death, outside the tight circle of the closest mourners and the victim himself, life goes on as other less closely concerned individuals act out their parts with only surface involvement. The inserted scenes also have their value in that they represent the passage of time. Flaubert describes Emma's agony in the most explicit realistic terms, and he wishes to show that it continues for many hours. But there is a limit to the number of pages he can devote to gasping breath, swollen tongue, and vomiting. The inclusion of the extra scenes, then, accounts for the elapse of much time in which the reader must assume that Emma is still suffering the torments of poisoning.

The interruptions also give Flaubert a chance to describe a sort of hierarchy of medical talent involved in the treatment of Emma. Charles, whom Flaubert never really criticizes because the husband is so emotionally involved, does nothing for Emma at the beginning, while there is still time to act. Instead he calls for help, the pharmacist, Homais, being the first to answer. Homais scurries about, talks of analysis, and also contributes nothing. In the subsequent scene, where he entertains Larivière, Homais suffers all the ridicule

and condemnation of which the pen of Flaubert is capable. Canivet arrives, a better doctor than Charles, for after all he had previously saved the life of Hippolyte. But he prescribes an emetic which brings on a more terrible phase of Emma's suffering, and is later upbraided for this action by Larivière. The importance of and the respect for the great doctor Larivière is shown both in the reactions of those present at his dramatic arrival and in a long paragraph by Flaubert eulogizing the physician. The editor of the Scribner edition, Christian Gauss, states that Flaubert is here describing his own father (p. xxii). In my opinion, Flaubert in this instance strays too far from the business at hand, which is, after all, Emma's death night. There is no advance in the action or in time as the result of this character sketch, nor does it contribute to the picture of provincial life as does the scene in the pharmacy. By the time Larivière sees Emma, there is really nothing to do for her and he leaves rather abruptly, sharing with Canivet Flaubert's mild reprimand: "Il sortit comme pour donner un ordre au postillon avec le sieur Canivet, qui ne se souciait pas non plus de voir Emma mourir entre ses mains" (p. 375).

Such, then, are the interludes in the death

passage. Returning to the action which is taking place simultaneously in Emma's bedroom, we find that the first two pages (368-69) concern the initial effects of the poisoning and the dilemma of poor Charles who looks on helplessly, ignorant of what is actually involved. At first Emma naïvely believes that since the first hour has brought no symptoms, death will be easy: "Ah, c'est bien peu de chose, la mort!" (p. 368). But the progress is swift from "une saveur âcre" (p. 368) to "cet affreux goût d'encre" (p. 368), to such horrors as: "Elle roulait sa tête avec un geste doux plein d'angoisse, et tout en ouvrant continuellement les mâchoires, comme si elle eût porté sur la langue quelque chose de très lourd" (pp. 368-69). This full page of explicit realistic physical description of her sufferings is followed by her admission of the poisoning, the spreading of the word around the village, and the summoning of Canivet and Larivière. Before the arrival of Canivet there is a remission of symptoms, during which Emma behaves with more affection toward Charles than at any time during the novel, an act which contributes to his personal sense of loss and tragedy. To explain her attitude Flaubert abandons the clinical language of the preceding pages and in poetic manner, reminiscent of Hugo's comparison

("Tristesse d'Olympio") of the decline of the passions to a troupe of actors disappearing behind the hill, says: "Elle ne haïssait personne, maintenant; une confusion de crépuscule s'abattait en sa pensée, et de tous les bruits de la terre Emma n'entendait plus que l'intermittente lamentation de ce pauvre coeur, douce et indistincte, comme le dernier écho d'une symphonie qui s'éloigne" (p. 371).

Wrapped in this beatific mood, Emma calls for her little daughter, perhaps thinking of Julie de Wolmar's beautiful farewells to her children. But Flaubert, who often shifts from the sublime to the ugliness of reality, does not allow her the comfort of such a scene. Instead he explains with clear rationality, first the confusion of the child, then her horror and fright on seeing her mother, and finally her struggle to escape Emma's kiss. This pathetic scene is followed closely by the arrival of Canivet who administers the emetic. His unfortunate prescription brings on half a page of the most horrible symptoms thus far, and the sickroom is a scene of violent agony on Emma's part and complete turmoil and confusion among the others present.

Such is the situation when the great Larivière comes upon the scene. After nearly a page of parenthe-

tical information about the doctor, which has been discussed earlier, Flaubert shows how quickly Larivière evaluates the situation, using his first gesture and the adjective "cadavéreuse" as the indications of his prognostication: "Il fronça les sourcils dès la porte, en apercevant la face cadavéreuse d'Emma, étendue sur le dos, la bouche ouverte" (p. 374). A subsequent gesture, "un geste lent des épaules," and his statement that there is nothing more to do, tell Charles, and the reader, that there is no hope for Emma. Larivière, Canivet, Homais and even Flaubert, it would seem, abandon Emma at this point for the very comic three-page interrupting scene, describing the meal at the pharmacy and the actions of the villagers.

Flaubert starts the transition from Homais' pharmacy back to the sickroom by means of the following sentence: "L'attention publique fut distraite par l'apparition de monsieur Bournisien, qui passait sous les halles avec les saintes huiles" (p. 377). But even this somber movement is interrupted by Homais' humorous comparison of the clergy to "des corbeaux qu'attire l'odeur des morts," and Flaubert's subsequent indictment of Homais: " . . . la vue d'un ecclésiastique lui était personnellement désagréable, car la soutane le faisait rêver au linceul, et il exécrait l'une un peu

par épouvante de l'autre" (p. 377). But it is significant that once Homais returns to the sickroom of the dying Emma, there are no further interruptions of scene or of mood. Homais refers to what his boys would have witnessed there, had his wife permitted their attendance, as "un tableau solennel." Therefore, the actual death scene in the case of Madame Bovary may be clearly defined as beginning: "La chambre, quand ils entrèrent, était toute pleine d'une solennité lugubre" (p. 378). It continues to the end of the chapter, and will be examined now in detail.

The first paragraph describes the scene encountered by Homais and Canivet on entering the room, the funereal mood that permeates that room, and the physical attitudes of the three people already present. The only movement in the scene is the ghastly one of Emma's hands; the only sound is the murmuring of the priest. The opening sentence is a simple statement that "une solennité lugubre" filled the room, immediately establishing the funereal atmosphere. One wonders, at this point, through whose eyes one is seeing the spectacle of Emma dying. The matter of point of view in this novel has not previously been discussed, but should perhaps be explained here. Flaubert opens his first chapter with an account of Charles' first day at school,

and the author casts himself as one of the other students: "Nous étions à l'étude, quand le Proviseur entra, suivi d'un nouveau . . . " (p. 3). He reminds us of this identity once more: "Il serait maintenant impossible à aucun de nous de se rien rappeler de lui" (p. 10). But to my knowledge, Flaubert never again makes any allusion to the all-seeing third person who recounts the remainder of the narrative. On the other hand, he is quite prone to describe a scene or an event as seen by one of his characters, accomplishing this phenomenon indirectly by substituting their way of thinking and their vocabulary for his own. Returning to the paragraph under study, are we seeing the scene through the eyes of Flaubert, the author, or through those of the pharmacist and Canivet as they enter the room? It is fairly easy to eliminate Canivet because of the attitude of aloofness and disinterest which he displays throughout the entire episode. But what about Homais? It is he who has announced that it will be a "tableau." Later in the paragraph the reference to the hands which wish to cover the body with the shroud, though expressed in the beautiful language of Flaubert, is an old and unoriginal idea which would have been familiar to Homais. And we would almost hope that the pharmacist, not Flaubert, chose the hackneyed comparisons,

"pâle comme une statue," and "les yeux rouges comme des charbons." However, there is no clear-cut indication of the substitution of Homais as viewer as in other passages in the novel, and there are artistic touches, such as the "geste hideux et doux," which could come only from the author. One can only conjecture that Flaubert is describing the scene, perhaps using Homais' view of it as a starting point.

Following the very general opening sentence, Flaubert picks out a very specific detail for the eye (Homais'?) to fall upon, "cinq ou six petites boules de coton." They stand out because they are white, on a silver platter, on a white napkin, and because there are two candles burning beside the dish. They also leap to the eye with special significance because, being near a large crucifix, they are symbolic of the last rites. There is only one sentence to describe Emma, but it is an extremely powerful one. As in the first description of her, early in the novel, Flaubert is concerned with her eyes and hands. Whatever emotion her eyes may be expressing would be most startlingly projected by the fact that they are open unusually wide and by the attitude of her chin resting on her chest, the latter position indicating that she is too weak to hold her mouth closed. The second part of the sentence,

concerning the "pauvres mains," seems to consider them as operating almost independently of Emma; she herself opens her eyes, but her hands appear to move about as quite separate agents. The use of the adjective "pauvres" in this sentence certainly injects the viewer's sympathy, whether it is Homais' or Flaubert's. The gesture of the hands is "hideux et doux," juxtaposing two very dissimilar adjectives and creating an artistic tension of which the druggist would have been incapable. It is the gesture "des agonisants" (another funereal word) and suggests the gruesome comparison discussed earlier: the hands seem to "vouloir déjà se recouvrir du suaire," thus bringing the shadow of the sepulchre into the room. The last sentence describes both Charles and the priest, each a motionless part of the tableau. Flaubert then makes the two short, rather trite comparisons which describe the intensity of Charles' emotion, contrasting his statue-like pallor and his eyes like red coals. Charles is presumably standing at the foot of the bed while the priest is kneeling on one knee. The verb "marmotter," like its English counterparts "mumble" and "mutter," is onomatopoeic, reflecting in this case the sounds of the priest's low-voiced prayers. At the same time there is the pejorative connotation of speaking indistinctly, indicating perhaps lack of interest or

concentration. The economy with which Flaubert communicates so much in this paragraph is truly remarkable.

There is a strong attention to poetic sound throughout the death passage. It is most apparent in the unction scene, but it is also in evidence in the first paragraph. The opening sentence marks a rapid change of mood from the preceding paragraph, which is concerned with Homais and full of ironic humor. We have already noted how this change is partially accomplished through vocabulary, but of equal importance is the sudden abundance of nasals and liquids and the attention to rhythm. The letters "l," "r," "m," "p," and "t" are used to great advantage. In the first sentence each phrase, as set off by commas, is a little longer than the preceding one. This tendency is demonstrated several times in the paragraph. For example, the six balls of cotton are "dans un plat d'argent, près d'un gros crucifix, entre deux chandeliers qui brûlaient." The rhythm of the last sentence is also interesting. Beginning with two phrases modifying Charles, the second slightly longer than the first, we come to the name Charles, standing alone, followed by "sans pleurer," and "se tenait en face d'elle," each longer than the one before. This pattern is again interrupted by the shorter "au pied du lit," but the

tendency toward increasing longness completes the sentence: " . . . tandis que le prêtre, appuyé sur un genou, marmottait des paroles basses."

All the verbs in the first paragraph, with the exception of "entrèrent" are in the imperfect tense, indicating that Flaubert is indeed creating his background for the first action of the death scene. Beginning with the next paragraph and the verb "tourna," in the past definite tense, there will be a long series of actions which will be interrupted some seven paragraphs later with the next group of imperfect verbs, which will in turn describe the background for the final action and the dying itself.

Had Flaubert been writing strictly for clarity and had he not consistently demonstrated a preference for the personal pronoun to avoid repetition of the name, he would probably have begun the second paragraph with "Emma" instead of "Elle." But the word "elle" has the desired "l" sound and is the right length. There is only one sentence in this transitional paragraph but it contains nine "l," fourteen "t," nine "r," five "p," five "v," and ten "s" or "z" sounds. The sentence begins in the general tone of the preceding paragraph for Emma turns her face slowly, but the words "et parut saisie de joie à voir tout à coup l'étoile

violette" mark a strong change of pace. After the pervading gloom that has gone before, the transformation is startling. It is, significantly, not the sight of the priest himself but of his purple stole that brings about the transformation. "Violette," parenthetically, is the fourth color used so far in the passage. The first half of the sentence is a statement of what Emma actually does, whereas the second half, beginning with "sans doute," is Flaubert's explanation of her reaction. He relates it to the present ("retrouvant au milieu d'un apaisement extraordinaire"), to the past ("la volupté perdue de ses premiers élancements mystiques"), and to the future ("avec des visions de béatitude éternelle qui commençaient"). Whereas the vocabulary of the first paragraph was decidedly funereal, the words in this sentence are words of sensual pleasure, both physical and religious. The physical comfort of the "apaisement extraordinaire" makes it possible to recapture "la volupté perdue" (purely sensual), and these synthesize with something higher ("des visions de béatitude éternelle").

The paragraph devoted to the ceremony of Extreme Unction begins quite naturally with the priest who rises to take the crucifix. But in the remainder of the first sentence, Emma takes over the action

completely. Like Lamartine's Mme Charles (is she again playing a role?), she seizes the crucifix and kisses it passionately. Flaubert reveals the extent of this passion in many ways, her action setting the tone for the rest of the paragraph which is a magnificent mixture of the ecclesiastical and the sensual. The description of Emma stretching her neck, enforced by the comparison to one who is thirsty, is extremely visual. The symbolic act of kissing the crucifix is expressed as "collant ses lèvres sur le corps de l'Homme-Dieu," each word being significantly physical, even the name of God emphasizing the flesh, as "Jésus-Christ," for example, would not have done. Flaubert finishes the sentence with words designed to show the extreme physical vigor of her last kiss and implies, by comparing its intensity to other kisses of love, that it is merely "le plus grand" of a series and not particularly different.

The second and final sentence of the paragraph opens again with the priest who performs three main actions: "il récita," "trempa," and "commença." It is interesting to note the development of the main verbs to this point. In the first sentence the priest performs one action, followed by two by Emma in the part of the sentence after the semicolon, culminating

in three by the priest in the final sentence. The use of the words "Misereatur" and "Indulgentiam" produces, in itself, the appropriate sounds, evocative of the actual Latin words of the priest. The precision rendered by the correct Latin names for the prayers, the use of the right thumb to apply the oil, and the accurate ritualistic order of the annointment lend a realism to the religious rites which contrasts markedly with the sensual interpretation.

After the three simple actions of the priest comes the colon and the listing of the parts of the body receiving the unctions. A certain continuity is achieved by the repetition of "puis sur" before each place touched by the oil-drenched thumb, also a certain monotony similar to the murmuring of the Latin words. But there is no monotony in the manner in which Flaubert characterizes each part of the body as it receives its holy benediction. We are immediately struck by the personification of the parts of the body which seem to have acted as separate agents, each with individual motives. There is also a definite progress in each part's contribution to the demoralization of the whole as the priest passes from head to foot. To the eyes Flaubert assigns one verb, "covet," and only one object, but that object is all-encompassing and

very damning, "toutes les souptuosités terrestres." Less sinful eyes would only have seen the earthly luxury, however, and not coveted it. The nostrils also perform their function as senses; here Flaubert uses one adjective, "friands," and its two complements, "brises tièdes" and "senteurs amoureuses." Any nostrils might smell warm breezes and odors of love, but the fondness for such is personification. The adjective "amoureuses" serves also to narrow down the sin involved. To describe the actions of the mouth, Flaubert uses three verbs in three clauses, each with its own complement. There are two parallel progressions: the mouth itself which opened, then moaned, and finally cried out; lending itself successively to the lie, to pride, and finally to lewdness. Up to this point in the sentence each application of the oil has produced a more complicated phrase, but with the hands Flaubert goes back to one simple statement, before terminating with a complicated one for the soles of the feet. This scheme of amplification and contraction was also noted in the first paragraph. To the hands are given the blame for the misuse of the sense of touch, but it is written so delicately and beautifully that there is really no sense of blame, except in the context of the whole paragraph. The soles of the feet are treated in

two ways, first with the adjective "rapides" and the adverbial clause "quand elle courait à l'assouissance de ses désirs." The word "assouissance" brings us full circle to the opening sentence where Emma stretches her neck like someone with a thirst. The adverb "autrefois" introduces one last act of the past, when the feet, then so vibrantly alive, finally brought about total downfall by carrying the rest of the body to the satisfaction of its desires. The contrasting adverb "maintenant" brings us back to the present and the pathos of the feet, which, no longer quick but very near death, "ne marcheraient plus," thus extending the tragedy to the future.

The sensuality of the vocabulary of the paragraph is so strong that it is unnecessary to point out individual words, for all seem to be chosen for this characteristic. They are also selected for the sensual sounds they make, as the paragraph is extremely euphonic. There are approximately thirty-one instances of the letter "r," twenty-eight of "l," as well as numerous "k," "s," "t," and "p" sounds. Usually they come in groups, such as the "r" which dominates the first part of the opening sentence, followed by the predominance of "l" in "alors elle allongea le cou . . . et, collant ses lèvres sur le corps de l'Homme-Dieu . . . " Other

outstanding phrases are: "qui avaient tant convoité toutes les somptuosités terrestres," "friandes de brises tièdes et de senteurs amoureuses," and "l'assouvisance de ses désirs."

By all Emma Bovary's romantic standards, formed in the reading which Flaubert carefully outlines to us throughout the novel, she could have died with some satisfaction at the end of this beautiful paragraph. But Flaubert will not permit her to do so and will return, after indulging himself in this poetic portrayal of the Extreme Unction ceremony, to the business of realistic dying. In the new paragraph "le prêtre" is now more simply "le curé," tending to the tidying up after the unctions. This action consists of wiping his hands, throwing the cotton in the fire, and, in almost the same spirit, automatically counseling "la moribonde" to abandon herself to the divine mercy. There is no doubt that the great exhaltation has come to an end when he tries to put in Emma's hand the candle, that "symbole des gloires célestes dont elle allait tout à l'heure être environnée." She is too weak to hold it "et le cierge, sans monsieur Bournisien, serait tombé à terre." Thus the celestial symbol seems to become an ordinary candle and, in parallel fashion, the priest has descended to the level of his everyday

name.

Like Julie de Wolmar, Emma shows a temporary improvement. We wonder why Flaubert does this, just as we wondered about Rousseau's motives. In this case, Flaubert seems to use the physical change in Emma to continue the transition from the unction scene to the final death scene, bringing the atmosphere back to reality. The fact that Emma is less pale and seems temporarily serene makes the final scene even more horrible as it emphasizes the fleeting quality of the effect of the religious rites. Flaubert takes the opportunity to contrast the reactions of M. Bournisien, who tries to make religious capital of the improvement, and of Charles, who grasps at the false hope, making his subsequent grief even more tragic. Emma, unlike Julie de Wolmar, who regretted the false hope her improvement inspired and worried about Claire and Wolmar, continues the pattern of her self-centered life by calling "d'une voix distincte" for her mirror. So the final communion is with her own reflection. Flaubert does not dwell on this narcissism, using only two sentences to describe it, but it is Emma's final, fully voluntary action, and it is made important by all that has preceded it, by the fact that it brings on the actual moments of death, and lastly by the

author's return to a prose very conscious of rhythm and sound. The preponderance of "l," "r," "d," and nasal sounds serves to substantiate the last comment, along with the gradually increasing length of the phrases in the second part of the first sentence, and the resemblance to the alexandrine hemistich in "en poussant un soupir," which falls between two balanced clauses "elle se renversa la tête" and "retomba sur l'oreiller."

Flaubert uses "elle" five times in the two sentences above, but in the third tableau which he paints of Emma's death, beginning "Sa poitrine aussitôt se mit à haleter rapidement," the focus changes to parts of the body. Thus he conveys the fact that the physical process of dying has taken control of Emma, as opposed to the still voluntary "elle regarda," "elle demanda," "elle resta," "elle se renversa," and "retomba" of the preceding paragraph. The explosive consonants in this first simple sentence also reflect the acceleration of the action. The second, very complex sentence, gives the most horrible physical description of death yet encountered, either in this novel or any of the others thus far considered. The first statement, concerning the tongue which comes all the way out of the mouth, is expressed simply in its

starkly unpleasant reality. The second part of the sentence begins with the eyes, whose action is rendered simultaneous to that of the mouth by use of the imperfect "pâlissaient," and by the gerundive "en roulant." Flaubert then constructs his sentence in tiers with five non-parallel phrases modifying either "pâlissaient" or each other successively. These manage to convey the scene with great visual and auditive horror, yet with economy. Included are two comparisons, the first of which is of the eyes to a concrete object, "deux globes de lampes qui s'éteignent." The second comparison is of "l'effrayante accélération de ses côtes" (the adjective is interpretive) to the figurative idea of the soul trying to leave the body, so that there is progress even in the dissimilar similes. Again the attention to sound is marked by an imitation of the content, the "s" sounds producing "un souffle furieux" of their own. The total effect of this sentence is jarring, both in content and in construction.

Beginning with the third sentence, Flaubert paints in the minor figures of his tableau, each in a characteristic pose. This sentence is constructed by means of Flaubert's typical development by three's, and the phrase describing each person is one syllable longer than the preceding one. The sight of Emma, as

described in the opening sentences, causes action on the part of Félicité and even the pharmacist; their verbs are in the past definite tense, whereas Canivet, accustomed to such scenes, "regardait vaguement sur la place." This is an excellent example of how a gifted writer makes use of even a prosaic verb form to enhance his style.

The description here of Bournisien is entirely visual. It is essentially concerned with his physical attitude (presumably kneeling since his face is against the side of the bed) and the color of the silhouette which he presents with his "soutane noire qui traînait derrière lui dans l'appartement." Here the tableau has all the movement required of a good composition in the sweep of the train coming away from the center of interest. Again each of the three sections of the sentence is increasingly longer, and there are a great many repetitions of "r" and numerous long sounds. This attention to rhythm continues in the two sentences concerning Charles. In the first, "à genoux" separates two balanced sections of the sentence which are equal in number of syllables. In the second there are three sections, all of which are equal. Of the five witnesses to Emma's death, Charles is the only one who is preoccupied with Emma herself,

both in his physical attitude and in his emotional state. His kneeling figure balances that of the priest on the other side of the bed. Like the others his pose is frozen, but unlike them he reaches toward Emma and holds her hands. His sensitivity to her suffering and to her dying is registered in a beautiful and poetic simile, notable for its "k," "t" and "r" sounds:

" . . . tressaillant à chaque battement de son coeur, comme au contre-coup d'une ruine qui tombe."

This paragraph, which began with the very realistic, visual description of the sufferings of various parts of Emma's body and then proceeded to a precise view of each character in the room, ends with a lyric impression of the sounds which emanate from the tragic scene. Even the last sentence, however, begins with the realism of the death rattle, but this is counteracted by the prayers of Bournisien who has now assumed the more prestigious title of "l'ecclésiastique." These sounds synthesize with the "sanglots étouffés de Bovary." The result is pure poetic sound which resembles the Latin prayer itself as one reads it because of the long phrases and the repetition of "s," "r," "t" and "l." The beautiful yet foreboding comparison, "syllabes latines qui tintaient comme un glas de cloche," establishes a high plane of expression

and another seemingly appropriate place for the death.

The author, however, is not Chateaubriand but Flaubert, and he will not let Emma Bovary off even this easily. Our ears, which have been filled with the beautiful sounds described above, are suddenly accosted by sounds of a very different quality. Flaubert has finished his visual scene and will complete Emma's death in dramatic form, cleverly using our ears as his means of transition. The suddenness of the interruption is made clear by the introductory "tout à coup" and the number of explosive consonants. In marked contrast to the exalted Latin words which produced a "sourd murmure," we have, from the sidewalk below, three unpleasant sounds: "un bruit de gros sabots," "le frôlement d'un bâton," and "une voix rauque." Then follow the words of the song which we, as well as Emma, have heard before. The encounters with "l'Aveugle" came on Emma's first and last trips to Rouen, but there is indication that she actually saw him almost every time she went to meet Léon. Her first view of him had made a profound impression: "Cela lui descendait au fond de l'âme comme un tourbillon dans un abîme, et l'emportait parmi les espaces d'une mélancolie sans bornes" (p. 312). "L'Aveugle" also appeared again on the occasion of her final trip to

Rouen. Homais upbraided him and invited him to visit his pharmacy for some salve. Hivert, the carriage driver, insisted that he perform his act of showing off his deformities and Emma was so revolted that she tossed him her entire fortune of five francs (p. 350). Thus Flaubert has laid the foundation for this terrible moment: the presence of "l'Aveugle" in Yonville, to see Homais about a cure, is logical; and Emma has a terror of this unfortunate man, both because of his deformities and because of her associations with seeing him.

Flaubert alternates snatches of the blind man's song and Emma's reaction to it, but one assumes that these are reasonably simultaneous actions. Her first reaction is silent, but such a violent shock that Flaubert compares it to the galvanization of a corpse. It is noteworthy that his last physical description of Emma, alive, is of her eyes: " . . . la prunelle fixe, béante." The second verse of the song, which we have not heard before, continues innocently enough and Emma, in full recognition now, screams her final word: "L'Aveugle!" Flaubert then describes the quality of her hysterical laughter, using his familiar development by three's: "atroce" seems to involve the witness to the laughter more than it does Emma; "frénétique" might

be from her point of view or from the outside; while "désespéré" would seem to emanate from within the desperate heroine. If this analysis of the progression is valid, it is interesting that in the remainder of the sentence Flaubert enters Emma's mind for the first time during the death passage. By doing so he is able to tell us that she dies, not in the comfort of someone's arms nor to the accompaniment of soothing Latin syllables, but in contemplation of the eternal harassment of a monster. "L'Aveugle" continues his little song to its somewhat naughty end, and in three short sentences Flaubert puts Emma to rest. The sentences are terse and factual; there is a final closing in, not unlike movie technique, as "Tous s'approchèrent." Then, with real relief, so vividly has Flaubert communicated the final agonies of Emma Bovary, we read: "Elle n'existait plus."

Although Emma is now dead, Flaubert devotes approximately fourteen more pages to the events surrounding the wake and the funeral. Again there is considerable contrast between the automatic show of grief of the surrounding characters and the genuine mourning of Charles. During this period, Charles emerges as a much stronger character than earlier in the book and fills the role of romantic bereavement so

well that the tragic blindness of Emma to the only real love in her life becomes even more evident.

There remain two passages in these last pages which bear examination. They both concern Charles' visits to the corpse of his wife: the first, on the night following death as she lies in bed under the sheet; the second, on the following evening after the women have prepared her for the funeral, using camphor and aromatic herbs and dressing her in her wedding gown (an operation marred by "et alors un flot de liquides noirs sortit, comme un vomissement, de sa bouche" [p. 386]). In the first passage there occurs a comparison of some significance: " . . . et ses yeux commençaient à disparaître dans une pâleur visqueuse qui ressemblait à une toile mince, comme si des araignées avaient filé dessus" (pp. 384-85). This is the artistic culmination of a metaphor begun early in the novel, during the period of disillusionment after the honeymoon: " . . . et l'ennui, araignée silencieuse, filait sa toile dans l'ombre à tous les coins de son coeur" (p. 52). The spider had emerged as a real spider, walking threateningly over her head, during a moment of crisis when Emma was at the home of the wet-nurse: "Elle contemplait les écaillures de la muraille, deux tisons fumant bout à bout, et une longue

araignée qui marchait au-dessus de sa tête, dans la fente de la poutrelle" (p. 358). Thus, the spider, identified earlier by Flaubert as "l'ennui," completes his work here in his final appearance by covering Emma's eyes completely. The realistic and somewhat disgusting "pâleur visqueuse" becomes surprisingly beautiful when employed in the metaphor.

While reading and examining the two passages of Charles' visits, I was struck by the similarity to Chateaubriand's wake scene in Atala. Is Flaubert amusing himself here with a parody of the Romantic writer's version? There does seem to be sufficient evidence to suggest such a possibility, but Flaubert is, of course, too concerned with the merit of his own work to go so far as to jeopardize his art. However, I would like to submit to the reader's own judgment the following interesting comparisons.

In the chapter dealing with Atala we observed the great emphasis on black and white in the scene where Chactas contemplates the Indian maid's body laid out in a piece of fine linen. Flaubert, too, opens his passage with insistence on black and white, both emanating, however, from horrible sources: "Le coin de sa bouche, qui se tenait ouverte, faisait comme un trou noir au bas de son visage; les deux pouces

restaient infléchis dans la paume des mains; une sorte de poussière blanche lui parsemait les cils . . . " (p. 384). The sheet she is covered with is presumably white. In the second visit she is dressed in her wedding gown: "Des moires frissonnaient sur la robe de satin, blanche comme un clair de lune" (p. 388). Here we have not only the whiteness but a reminder of Chateaubriand's famous "clair de lune." On the following page, Charles, who has left the room in distress, calls back a request for a lock of Emma's hair. Homais obliges him, and Flaubert recounts the incident in such a manner that the black and white effect seems quite contrived: "Enfin, se raidissant contre l'émotion, Homais donna deux ou trois grands coups au hasard, ce qui fit des marques blanches dans cette belle chevelure noire" (p. 389).

In the first passage, Flaubert, too, presents his statue-like description of Emma. Mouth, eyes, hands, feet and breast are all described as in Atala, but quite differently. The mouth is a black hole rather than like a rose gathered two days earlier; the attitude of her thumbs is described as opposed to Atala's "mains d'albâtre"; instead of the "pieds modestes" of the Indian maid, Flaubert mentions the big toes over which the sheet rises in a point. Following

the description of Emma, Flaubert switches to a consideration of the sounds in the room: "L'horloge de l'église sonna deux heures. On entendait le gros murmure de la rivière qui coulait dans les ténèbres au pied de la terrasse. Monsieur Bournisien, de temps à autre, se mouchait bruyamment, et Homais faisait grincer sa plume sur le papier" (p. 385). Chateaubriand, at a similar moment, considered the sounds of the church bell, of falling water, and of the clergy: "Les roucoulements de la colombe de Virginie, la chute d'un torrent dans la montagne, les tintements de la cloche qui appelait les voyageurs, se mêlaient à ces chants funèbres . . ." (p. 133).

There are still other fascinating though less obvious similarities. In the second Flaubert passage the scene is lit, not by the moon, which in the Chateaubriand version "prêta son pâle flambeau à cette veillée funèbre," but by the flame of candlelight itself. It is at just this point that Flaubert compares Emma's wedding gown to a "clair de lune." Flaubert talks of the night and the slight wind and "les senteurs humides qui montaient." Chateaubriand writes: "De temps en temps, le religieux plongeait un rameau fleuri dans une eau consacrée, puis secouant

la branche humide, il parfumait la nuit des baumes du ciel" (p. 133). Both grieving men, Charles and Chactas, remember their love in happier times, and it is perhaps not without significance that later, when Bournisien passes the spade to Charles at the interment, Charles refuses it and throws on the dirt with his bare hands, much as the savage had done at the burial in the wilderness.

Whether or not one accepts the possibility that Flaubert is amusing himself in the passages quoted above, there can be little quarrel with the fact that in this author evidences of the modern writer are beginning to appear. Gone are the idealized descriptions of Chateaubriand and Hugo, yet something of each of them is still present in his work. For Flaubert is seeking to write with artistry just as did the author of Atala, and he will borrow words and techniques from Chateaubriand, whether consciously or unconsciously, even as he attacks the unreality of Romanticism. As a matter of fact, this eclecticism emerges as Flaubert's most outstanding characteristic. Like Hugo he will juxtapose the sublime and the ugly, but with considerably more subtlety and realism, and often for pure ironic effect. This ironic humor permeates even the death chapter and views with scathing honesty

adulterers, clergy, townspeople, moneylenders, doctors, and pompous know-it-alls alike. But even though Flaubert paints a specific area of provincial France during a certain era, the result is a classical depiction because of the universality of the human qualities with which he is concerned.

The analysis of the death scene of Madame Bovary certainly proves the great care with which Flaubert worked, for each word seems to have special significance, as in a laboriously constructed poem, and there are interrelationships in abundance. Craftsmanship, so often neglected by our present-day writers, reaches its zenith with Flaubert, and yet his philosophy as it emerges from this novel seems quite similar to that of the typical twentieth-century novelist: pessimistic and bitter; full of ironic humor; tolerant of human frailty, but fiercely hostile to any type of hypocrisy.

VI. L'ASSOMMOIR

Zola's Gervaise Coupeau is the only one of the six heroines of this study who dies alone with no one to mourn her death. One is reminded of the ancient argument about the tree which falls in the forest with no ear to hear it. Does the crash make any sound? Zola, who has been omnipresent throughout his novel, chooses not to witness Gervaise's actual moment of death, with the result that it causes very little reverberation. Although L'Assommoir is essentially a novel about the unhealthy milieu of the working classes and alcoholism in particular, it is Gervaise, not her alcoholic husband, who is the central character. As in the cases of Julie de Wolmar and Emma Bovary, there is real interest in her life as a woman, but there would seem at first glance to be much less interest in her death. It is recounted with great brevity almost immediately after the very long, extremely vivid account of the death of her alcoholic husband. Since Gervaise, not Coupeau, is the protagonist, there would seem to be an artistic imbalance here.

There are several possible reasons for Zola's

choice in the matter, the most important being that his purpose was sociological as well as artistic. The following words from the preface are a very succinct outline of the plot of the novel:

J'ai voulu peindre la déchéance fatale d'une famille ouvrière, dans le milieu empesté de nos faubourgs. Au bout de l'ivrognerie et de la fainéantise, il y a le relâchement des liens de famille, les ordures de la promiscuité, l'oubli progressif des sentiments honnêtes, puis comme dénouement, la honte et la mort. C'est de la morale en action, simplement.¹

The effects of habitual drunkenness and sloth are the sermon which Zola will preach throughout the novel, and the descent is certain from the time that Coupeau takes his first drink of "eau-de-vie." From that fateful moment till his death following delirium tremens, the destiny of the Coupeau family, which was just on the verge of establishing itself through industry and economy, is directed toward its inevitable, tragic end. Gervaise herself does not become an alcoholic to the same extent as her husband, though only because she lacks the money to do so. In the end she actually dies of starvation, but her death is also the result of Coupeau's alcoholism. Since it is among Zola's

¹Emile Zola, L'Assommoir (Paris: Charpentier, 1922), I, v-vi. All references to L'Assommoir in my text are to this edition, and volume and page numbers will appear in parentheses.

goals to condemn this disease, its horrors are depicted in great detail and at great length. The dénouement, which includes Gervaise's death, must then be sufficiently swift and unobtrusive to avoid obscuring the moral.

Although the death passage consists of less than two pages and the actual moment of death is not recounted at all, there is evidence that here the artist in Zola does take over the reins from the sociologist. For despite the brevity of the passage, there are indications that Gervaise's death is even worse than Coupeau's and that it is, in fact, an artistic completion of her character. It will also be seen, on closer examination, that Zola has carefully been looking ahead to this moment during the entire novel, so that he can say with justification at the end: "La mort devait la prendre petit à petit, morceau par morceau, en la traînant ainsi jusqu'au bout dans la sacrée existence qu'elle s'était faite [*italics mine*]" (II, 270). Of the passages in the text which seem to relate either directly or indirectly to the final death paragraph, some illustrate how carefully and often artistically the downfall of Gervaise is foreshadowed, while others are offensively obvious, as Zola makes certain that even the densest of his readers will be aware of his message.

From the beginning of the novel Gervaise is

portrayed as an almost classical tragic character in that she has one fatal flaw, an easy-going nature which accepts both the good and the bad that come her way. Zola tells us that Gervaise is a fairly attractive, warm-hearted, generous and hard-working woman who, unfortunately, never fights a bad situation. For example, she explains at the beginning of the novel how she happens to find herself abandoned in Paris with two children to raise:

J'avais quatorze ans et lui dix-huit, quand nous avons eu notre premier. L'autre est venu quatre ans plus tard... C'est arrivé comme ça arrive toujours, vous savez. Je n'étais pas heureuse chez nous; le père Macquart, pour un oui, pour un non, m'allongeait des coups de pied dans les reins. Alors, ma foi, on songe à s'amuser dehors... On nous aurait mariés, mais je ne sais plus, nos parents n'ont pas voulu. (I, 19)

A few weeks later she is courted by the roofer, Coupeau. Appropriately enough they go to the "Assommoir," the local saloon, but only to eat a plum soaked in brandy, careful in their innocence not to take any of the sauce. After a conversation during which both decry the use of alcohol, Gervaise confides to Coupeau what she wants out of life. These simple goals are significantly repeated at various times during the novel and are relevant to the death scene because its circumstances are a denial of all her aspirations:

Mon idéal, ce serait de travailler tranquille, de manger toujours du pain, d'avoir un trou un peu propre pour dormir, vous savez, un lit, une table

et deux chaises, pas davantage... Ah! je voudrais aussi élever mes enfants, en faire de bons sujets, si c'était possible... . . .

. --Oui, on peut à la fin avoir le désir
de mourir dans son lit... . . . (I, 49)

The day of Coupeau's proposal, he and Gervaise climb the six flights of stairs of the apartment building where his sister and her husband live, in order to tell them the news. Later, in the last days of their lives together, Gervaise will contemplate suicide from this same sixth floor to which she now climbs for the first time:

Alors, tout en haut, les jambes cassées, l'haleine courte, elle eut la curiosité de se pencher au-dessus de la rampe; . . . et les odeurs, la vie énorme et grondante de la maison, lui arrivaient dans une seule haleine, battaient d'un coup de chaleur son visage inquiet, se hasardant là comme au bord d'un gouffre. (I, 65-66)

The word "gouffre," used here as the young country girl contemplates such a stairwell probably for the first time in her life, is not too strong for a realistic description of her reaction, yet it undeniably carries overtones of foreboding and dread. Years later, as she nears the end of her degraded life, she climbs the same stairs:

Puis, en montant les six étages, dans l'obscurité, elle ne put s'empêcher de rire; un vilain rire, qui lui faisait du mal. Elle se souvenait de son idéal, anciennement: travailler

tranquille, manger toujours du pain, avoir un trou un peu propre pour dormir, bien élever ses enfants, ne pas être battue, mourir dans son lit. Non, vrai, c'était comique, comme tout ça se réalisait! Elle ne travaillait plus, elle ne mangeait plus, elle dormait sur l'ordure, sa fille courait le guilledou, son mari lui flanquait des tatouilles; il ne lui restait qu'à crever sur le pavé, et ce serait tout de suite, si elle trouvait le courage de se flanquer par la fenêtre, en rentrant chez elle. (II, 246)

In these two quotations we have illustrations of both the artistry and the clumsiness of the author. In the first, only the word "gouffre" gives us any clues to the agony which will later take place in the tenement house, and the combination of physical giddiness and intuitive fear is very subtle. In the second case, Zola is making sure that we do not miss the point that Gervaise has failed to reach any of her pathetically limited goals in life. Even in her drunken and starved condition she manages to remember her thoughts, uttered so many years before, in exactly the same order and almost word for word.

At the zenith of Gervaise's success as a laundress she has spoken of this same ideal, each detail again repeated in the same order, ending: "Quant à mourir dans son lit, ajoutait-elle en plaisantant, elle y comptait mais le plus tard possible, bien entendu" (I, 173). Here it is more logical that she should

remember her ideal with such accuracy, and the aura of success and confidence which she exudes is communicated by the expression "en plaisantant." When the reader is allowed to see for himself the irony of her words, as in this case, he is more likely to feel real pity for the heroine.

Just as there is progress throughout the novel in the extent and nature of Coupeau's drinking, there is parallel progress in the advancing "gourmandise" and moral degeneration of Gervaise. Her interest in food, her generosity to friends and neighbors, and a certain pride in her accomplishments in the laundry lead Gervaise to plan the feast for her Saint's day (I, 248). This should have been an important moment in her life, and it is, indeed, the "great scene" of the novel. The full description of the banquet and of the fourteen working-class guests as they attack the goose and the wine is a magnificent piece of writing. But the feast is also another milestone in the progress toward gluttony and sloth. The night of the dinner is marred for Gervaise when her former lover, Lantier, shows up and Coupeau ends by inviting him to eat at the table. This leads, several months later, to Coupeau's inviting him to share their living quarters, and eventually Lantier also shares Gervaise's bed. Even

before Gervaise resumes her old relationship with Lantier she finds herself struggling to support the two men, further evidence of her too-easy acceptance of events. The new living arrangements destroy the only beautiful part of Gervaise's life, the physically innocent love affair with the young blacksmith, Gouget. The termination of this love marks the end of Gervaise as a human being with human aspirations, and, as Zola has said in the preface, there is "comme dénouement, la honte et la mort." She loses her laundry shop and lives in filth: "Même la saleté était un nid chaud où elle jouissait de s'accroupir" (II, 65). She and her family are forced to move to the hated sixth floor; they begin to pawn their belongings; Gervaise even joins Coupeau and his loathsome friends at "l'Assommoir." For a time Coupeau works a bit and they alternately eat, drink and starve. One terrible night, Gervaise, nearly mad with hunger, takes her last promenade. Cold, hungry and in need of a drink, she joins the shadowy figures of the Paris streetwalkers and shyly accosts several men, only to be even more deeply humiliated by their complete lack of interest. Of all the men in Paris she might meet in such an occupation, she approaches first one who turns out to be Old Bru, the poverty-stricken beggar who occupies a niche under the stairway

in her rooming house, and later her idealistic lover, Goujet. Although these two encounters serve to illustrate her complete degradation, the implausibility of such coincidences weakens the pathos.

In addition to implying through characterization and plot development the downfall and subsequent death of Gervaise Coupeau, Zola has included one character who appears at significant moments and whose symbolic nature is clearly that of a personified death wish. He is "le père Bazouge, un croquemort d'une cinquantaine d'années" (I, 118). There is a definite progression both in Gervaise's encounters with this creature and her reactions to him. The newly-wed Coupeau couple first meet Bazouge on the night of their marriage. He is filthy and drunk and frightens Gervaise so much that she begs Coupeau to send him away. Bazouge is offended, brags about the corpse he has removed that afternoon, and declares: "Ça ne vous empêchera pas d'y passer, ma petite... Vous serez peut-être bien contente d'y passer, un jour... Oui, j'en connais des femmes, qui diraient merci, si on les emportait" (I, 119).

The next time Bazouge enters the story, it is in his professional capacity as undertaker, for he has come for Mme Coupeau's body at the given address.

Though it is the mother-in-law who is dead, he takes it for granted that it is Gervaise and is quite startled when the younger woman greets him. Gervaise is understandably horrified to discover that Bazouge has actually come for her:

Elle l'écoutait, se reculait, avec la peur qu'il ne la saisisse de ses grandes mains sales, pour l'emporter dans sa boîte. . . .

. . . . Alors, le croque-mort se montra goguenard et insolent.

--Dites donc, ma petite mère, ce sera pour une autre fois. . . . C'est moi qui suis le consolateur des dames... Et ne crache pas sur le père Bazouge, parce qu'il en a tenu dans ses bras de plus chic que toi, qui se sont laissés arranger sans se plaindre, bien contentes de continuer leur dodo à l'ombre. (II, 93)

Several progressions are notable in the relationship between Gervaise and the undertaker. The first meeting was a mere accidental encounter. This time, an actual corpse is involved and Bazouge's mistake in identity makes his presence much more threatening. For the first time Gervaise considers the possibility of his taking her with his dirty hands. When Bazouge speaks to her on this occasion he begins to use the familiar form of the verb. He waxes more eloquent on his relationship with dead women, and employs much of the language of the death scene, including the childish expression "dodo," which will be prominent in the last line of the novel.

It is not long before Gervaise is forced to live in the apartment next to Bazouge when it becomes financially necessary to move to the sixth floor. Now that everything worthwhile seems to be over for Gervaise, her curiosity about Bazouge increases; he terrifies yet fascinates her to such an extent that his comings and goings become an obsession. The following excerpts show the progress of her growing familiarity with Bazouge. Lying in bed, separated from him by a thin partition, she considers asking him to end her misery:

Eh bien! si la peur ne l'avait pas retenue, Gervaise aurait voulu tâter la mort, voir comment c'était bâti. . . . Peu à peu, une tentation plus cuisante lui venait d'y goûter. Elle aurait voulu essayer pour quinze jours, un mois.
(II, 124)

Finally one night she calls out to Bazouge, not once but twice, in order to make him hear. When he answers she awakens as if from a nightmare: "Non, non, elle ne voulait pas, elle n'était pas prête" (II, 125). Upon returning home from the terrible experience of attempted prostitution, Gervaise sees a light coming from under Bazouge's door, and suddenly she enters and throws herself at his feet:

--Emmenez-moi, répéta plus ardemment Gervaise. . . . donnez vos mains, je n'ai plus peur! Emmenez-moi faire dodo, vous sentirez si je remue... Oh! je n'ai qu'une envie, oh! je vous aimerai bien! (II, 248)

Awakened from sleep, Bazouge is quite startled by her actions: "Dame! il y a une petite opération auparavant... Vous savez, couic!" (II, 249). Bazouge does not appear again until the last page of the novel when the "petite opération" of which he speaks here has taken place.

Although the disintegration of Gervaise's character has been a gradual process, her insanity comes on very quickly as the result of witnessing Coupeau's ghastly death. Quite briefly Zola makes the statement that Gervaise has lost her mind, actually subordinating that important fact to the manner in which the insanity manifests itself:

Depuis ce jour, comme Gervaise perdait la tête souvent, une des curiosités de la maison était de lui voir faire Coupeau. On n'avait plus besoin de la prier, elle donnait le tableau gratis, tremblement des pieds et mains, lachant de petits cris involontaires. . . . Mais elle n'était pas chanceuse, elle n'en crevait pas comme lui. (II, 269-70)

The economy with which her tragedy is expressed in the last sentence of this quotation is indicative of the manner in which Zola will describe her death. No death could seemingly be worse than that of Coupeau

and yet, simply by the use of the word "chanceuse," Zola conveys the fact that Gervaise does, indeed, die an even worse death.

The entire passage of the death scene, which will be studied in detail, is completed in two pages (II, 270-71). Zola recounts the death itself in one paragraph, by means of a series of narrative statements. Had he chosen to develop them, each sentence might have been another chapter. Again we wonder why he chose to be so brief. Was he trying to conclude his novel with an unemotional, clinical approach? Did he wish to avoid lessening the impact of the death of the husband? Was he trying to show that since Gervaise was no longer a thinking human being, there was no more need to tell what, if anything, went on in her mind at the end? Was he reacting to the long, sometimes overdone death scenes of heroines, such as the ones we have considered here in earlier chapters? Or was he experimenting with the stylistic possibilities of the power of understatement? Probably all these factors were somewhat involved in his decision to treat the heroine's death with such brevity. Close examination will show, however, that the economy is no indication that the passage is lacking in artistry.

The death paragraph begins: "Gervaise dura

ainsi pendant des mois" (II, 270). Thus, from the very beginning, Zola indicates that although his narrative will be brief, the death itself is actually a very slow one. There are three essential movements in the paragraph: the first, which concerns the time before death, is introduced by the sentence just quoted; the second begins with "Maintenant, elle habitait la niche du père Bru." Here Gervaise has moved into the location where the dying will take place. The third movement, which contains the fact of death, is announced rather startlingly: "Même on ne sut jamais de quoi elle était morte."

The importance of verbs throughout the passage, in direct contrast to the paucity of adjectives, is quite noticeable. For example, the simple verb "durer" in the first sentence, defined by Larousse as "continuer d'être" or "se prolonger," suggests that Gervaise does not live for several months but merely exists or lasts. After this introductory sentence in the past definite tense, the first two movements, identified above, are written in the pluperfect and imperfect tenses, the former used for narration and explanation, the latter expressing repeated actions, viewed here as a continuous situation. The three verbs and their complements in the second sentence summarize the action that will

follow: "Elle dégringolait plus bas encore" concerns what Gervaise does to lower herself, such as the drinking and the eating of a foul object; "[elle] acceptait les dernières avanies" relates to what others do to her and is significantly expressed as what she accepts; and "[elle] mourait un peu de faim tous les jours" refers to the actual physical disintegration which is taking place. The third sentence is an amplification of the verb "dégringolait": "Dès qu'elle possédait quatre sous, elle buvait et battait les murs." There is a whole episode condensed here in the progress between verbs, from receiving the money, to buying the drink, to being so drunk that she beats the walls. The next sentences concern what others do to her and refer not only to the "acceptait" but also to "les dernières avanies" of the earlier sentence: "On la chargeait des sales commissions du quartier." Zola then gives an example, and as it is the first particular event of the paragraph it is introduced by "un soir": "Un soir on avait parié qu'elle ne mangerait pas quelque chose de dégoûtant; et elle l'avait mangé, pour gagner dix sous." The complete degradation is emphasized by the fact that even people low enough to bait her in such a manner cannot all believe that she would accept such a challenge, for some bet that she will not. A

further "avanie" is the decision of the landlord to throw her out of her already disgusting quarters on the sixth floor and to place her in the "niche" occupied by "le père Bru." The words "niche" and "trou," generally used to refer to animal shelters, and the presence of the straw, not fresh but "vieille," contribute to the impression of bestial living conditions. Thus her situation is even worse than that of Bru, for even he had an occasional scrap of bread and human sympathy from Gervaise herself.

Not only does Gervaise inhabit Bru's "niche," but like him, she awaits death in misery: "C'était là dedans, sur de la vieille paille, qu'elle claquait du bec, le ventre vide et les os glacés." Although this sentence could hardly be referred to as completely visual, it is the closest approximation to a scene that we have in the passage. There has been a narrowing-down process thus far in the paragraph from the other apartment-dwellers to Gervaise now alone. Her hunger is expressed in two ways, "elle claquait du bec" and "le ventre vide," both alluding to the slow starvation of the opening sentence. The next sentence might be either the author's words or Gervaise speaking in free indirect discourse: "La terre ne voulait pas d'elle, apparemment." Interestingly it is "la terre" and not

"le ciel," as in the case of our previous heroines, to which she is expected to go after death. Thus does Gervaise end her days, so differently from her modest aspirations of dying in her own bed.

After depicting her physical misery, Zola turns to her mental state: "Elle devenait idiote, elle ne songeait seulement pas à se jeter du sixième sur le pavé de la cour, pour en finir." That her idiocy is measured in terms of her not having sufficient rationality left to jump from the sixth floor is further indication of the ghastly state in which she exists. In contrast to the quick finality of the "pour en finir" of this sentence, the next one emphasizes again the torturous slowness of death: "La mort devait la prendre petit à petit, morceau par morceau" The sentence ends with the harsh judgment of Zola, who blames all the misery on Gervaise herself: " . . . en la traînant ainsi jusqu'au bout dans la sacrée existence qu'elle s'était faite."

The language which Zola employs in the course of this paragraph is most striking. With the possible exception of the one sentence mentioned ("La terre ne voulait pas d'elle . . . "), the entire paragraph is narrated by the author. Although the grammatical structure is appropriately correct and proper and without

the coarseness associated with direct or indirect discourse, the vocabulary is rich in familiar expressions not used traditionally in written composition: "dégringolait," "quatre sous," "claquait du bec," "ne songeait seulement pas," "petit à petit, morceau par morceau," and "sacrée." The use of such words must be a conscious effort on the author's part to evoke the sort of world in which Gervaise lived and died.

We are startled to realize, after reading the next sentence, which introduces the third movement of the paragraph, that Gervaise is dead, that she has, indeed, died between sentences: "Même on ne sut jamais au juste de quoi elle était morte." The manner in which we learn that she is dead, alone and unmourned, is as though we suddenly overheard the neighbors (who have now returned to the story) discussing the possible cause of her death. This impression is heightened in the next sentence where Zola uses the words "on parla" and a vocabulary and viewpoint appropriate to the neighbors: "On parla d'un froid et chaud." The author then intervenes and states his own theory grandly and with complete assurance, using the imperfect tense of the verb to express the gradual quality of the death: "Mais la vérité était qu'elle s'en allait de misère, des ordures et des fatigues de sa vie gâtée." With

these three nouns Zola sums up all the events and situations that have led to this moment, and Gervaise reaches the "déchéance fatale" predicted in the preface. The Lorilleux, her despicable in-laws, maintain their haughty attitude in their own theory, Zola expressing their viewpoint by using their vocabulary: "Elle creva d'avachissement" We find out how her death was discovered through the same style of overheard callous gossip, manifested in this case by the use of the familiar "ça" and the graphic, unpleasant revelation: " . . . on se rappela qu'on ne l'avait pas vue depuis deux jours; et on la découvrit déjà verte, dans sa niche."

It is interesting to note that the naturalistic description of the body of Gervaise is alexandrine-like and scans 6/3/3: " . . . et on la découvrit déjà verte, dans sa niche." There are five repetitions of the letter "r" and six of "d" in the sentence as a whole. The "découvrit déjà verte" repeats the "dé-v" combination effectively.

The last paragraphs of the passage, and of the entire novel, are concerned with "le père Bazouge qui vint avec la caisse des pauvres sous le bras, pour l'emballer." Two of these paragraphs are in narrative style alternating with two direct quotations of Bazouge's words. The first narrative paragraph con-

tinues the author's point of view, but it is full of familiar expressions of the neighborhood: "Il était encore joliment souî, ce jour-là, mais bon zig tout de même, et gai comme un pinson." The second paragraph contains the familiar word "béguin," but is otherwise written in literary language. Nearly all the vocabulary concerning Bazouge has appeared in earlier parts of the novel.

Zola introduces the appearance of the undertaker with "Justement, ce fut le père Bazouge qui vint" As we have seen, Zola has carefully prepared for this ending throughout the novel. The account of the undertaker's last meeting with the laundress is a strange mixture of realism, symbolism, horror and tenderness. The realistic vocabulary includes such words as "la caisse des pauvres," "pour l'emballer," "joliment souî," "bière," and "hoquets." There is even a sordidness in the words which are a sort of paraphrasis of the real action: "Quand il eut reconnu la pratique à laquelle il avait affaire, . . . en préparant son petit ménage." The lyricism which so surprisingly accompanied the naturalism of the last sentence before Bazouge's appearance continues throughout the remainder of the passage. There is the interior rhyme of the nasals: "préparant," "quand," "justement," "emballer,"

and "encore"; "bon," "pinson," "réflexions," and "son." "Fut," "eut," and reconnu" follow each other in quick succession. In addition there are four "ou" sounds in the first two sentences, and in the paragraph as a whole there are eleven "r's," thirteen "l's," seven "p's," seven "m's," and five occurrences of the sounds of "je," as well as twelve of "s" or "z."

Bazouge's philosophic reflections which make up the first paragraph of direct quotation are very short thoughts, appropriate to his capacities; they are separated by elipsis marks, indicating that he is taking care of "son petit ménage" in the interim. There is a progression from a very general statement about "tout le monde," to a separation of everyone into two types: "Les uns veulent, les autres ne veulent pas." Once he has narrowed down to the specific case of Gervaise, Bazouge summarizes the various phases of her attitude toward death, using the same words he has used throughout the novel concerning his clientele: "En v'là une qui ne voulait pas, puis elle a voulu. Alors, on l'a fait attendre... Enfin ça y est, et, vrai! elle l'a gagné! Allons-y gaiement!" With the verb "allons" of the last sentence, Bazouge begins to talk to Gervaise rather than about her.

The rhythm of these sentences in Bazouge's

speech is also significant. The first sentences scan approximately 5/10/10: "Tout le monde y passe... On n'a pas besoin de se bousculer, il y a de la place pour tout le monde..." The next sentence seems to be 7/7 while the following one is 1/6/5: "Et c'est bête d'être pressé, parce qu'on arrive moins vite... Moi, je ne demande pas mieux que de faire plaisir." Several other word groups are of five beats each: "puis elle a voulu," "on l'a fait attendre," and "allons-y gaielement." Words are repeated and balanced, such as "tout le monde" (twice), "veulent" and "ne veulent pas," "voulait" and "voulu," "y" and "y." There is the interior rhyme of "place" and "passe," as well as that produced by an interesting combination of the proximity of "a" and a nasal: "arrangez un peu ça," "en v'là," "on l'a," "enfin ça" and reversed in "allons." The last of the sentences in the first paragraph concerning Bazouge also include "voulait," "fait," "est," "vrai," "gagné," and "gaielement."

The lyricism of the final paragraph manifests itself in the abundance of liquid "l" sounds and nasals. Part of the last sentence, "Tu sais... écoute bien... c'est moi, Bibi-la-Gaîté," has several almost similar "é" sounds and scans quite interestingly 2/3/2/5. Zola temporarily returns to third-person narration at the

beginning of this paragraph and Bazouge, as he takes up Gervaise in his "grosses mains noires," represents both the undertaker and death itself. His hands, which have at other times been "sales," are now "noires." The word "tendresse," describing the emotion which overtakes him, is reinforced by other words such as "doucement" and "soin paternel." The insistence on fatherliness in his attitude also removes the occasionally erotic overtones of their past relationship. His tenderness contrasts with "ses grosses mains noires," just as his soft indistinct words of consolation contrast with the fact that they are uttered "entre deux hoquets." The compassionate attitude continues in the last words of the novel as death, in the person of Bazouge, uses language vaguely reminiscent of "Good night, sweet prince": "Tu sais... écoute bien... c'est moi, Bibi-la-Gaîté dit le consolateur des dames... Va t'es heureuse. Fais dodo, ma belle!"

Since Zola's name is linked with naturalism, determinism, sociology and psychology, it is interesting to reflect on the extent to which these semi-scientific approaches to the writing of literature are apparent in the death scene of Gervaise Coupeau, or in areas of the novel relating to the death scene. There is a definite sociological slant to the recounting of

Gervaise's life. From an environmental standpoint she has very little chance for success since by the age of fourteen she is beaten and crippled by a cruel father and is herself the mother of an illegitimate child. With regard to heredity, Gervaise is a member of the doomed Macquart family. Yet Zola seems to contradict his own theory of determinism by his final judgment of Gervaise in which he contends that she died as the result of "*la sacrée existence qu'elle s'était faite*" (II, 270). There is also a very successful attempt throughout the novel to follow her actions from a psychological point of view, so that the reader is made to understand and even sympathize with her most degrading acts. The psychological deterioration is complete in the final passages where Zola makes it clear that Gervaise has lost her mind and descended to bestiality.

The death scene of Gervaise's husband is the one which Zola might have been expected to write for his heroine. Coupeau dies of an inherited disease, alcoholism, and there is a wealth of clinical detail to document the horrors of delirium tremens. But Gervaise's death is told quite differently. The account is brief, vague, lacking in specific detail and documentation, and ends in a surprising combination of

naturalism and lyricism. The naturalism consists of both the vocabulary, often that of the working class, and the sordid situation. The three naturalistic details are not amplified in any way: the eating of the disgusting object, the smell in the corridor, and the body already green. The death paragraph, rather than being graphic and specific, contains, on the contrary, many quite vague expressions: "les dernières avanies," "sales commissions du quartier," "quelque chose de dégoûtant," and "on ne sut jamais au juste de quoi elle était morte." Not only is there no documentation here, but the reader's imagination is stimulated to provide the details for himself, a technique more often associated with poetry. Other poetic tendencies, such as the degree of attention to sound and rhythm have been commented upon earlier. Perhaps of even more importance to the lyricism of the passage is the carefully maintained symbolism of death in the person of the revolting undertaker, Bazouge.

The death scene of Gervaise Coupeau is in a sense a paradox: while Zola has taken great care in its writing, even to the extent of subordinating his favorite scientific theories, he has also refused

to make of it a visual and dramatic production. Even on the first reading one is aware of the power of the last two pages of his novel, but the source of this artistic beauty comes to light only after detailed examination of the intricacies of the composition.

CONCLUSION

The number of pages devoted to the heroine's death scene was one of many criteria used in this study to determine the degree of each author's emphasis on that portion of his novel. The length of this thesis is still another physical measure of the craftsmanship with which these passages were produced: had the writing been more casual, the explications could have been much shorter.

Now that all the heroines have been considered individually, it will be of interest to look at them as a group. There is a wide divergence, for example, in their social positions, which range from the landed aristocracy in the case of Julie de Wolmar to the urban working class in that of Gervaise Coupeau. Manon Lescaut is a courtesan, but of a seemingly well-bred and pampered variety; Atala, a poor Indian maid, is nonetheless a princess; because of the mystery of her birth, La Esmeralda is at the same time a social outcast and an influential member of the powerful, though stateless, gypsy tribe; Emma Bovary is the only representative of the bourgeoisie. There is also considerable variety in the causes of the heroines' deaths: two poisonings, one hanging, one case

of starvation, another of exposure, and one pneumonia-like disease. But though these women die for such different physical reasons, they all are young and perish before their time. Each heroine is also a victim, at least according to the author, of forces other than the physical one which actually brings on death. Sometimes these forces are entirely external ones. Atala's life, for example, is ruined through a combination of ignorance and unenlightened Catholicism, while La Esmeralda is the victim of both society and fate, whose concrete form is that of Claude Frollo. The other four heroines themselves contribute, in varying degrees, to their own downfall. Des Grieux feels that he and Manon are the victims of parents and society, but Prévost shows that Manon's flightiness and love of material comforts are also involved. Julie is victim of a personal conflict between passion and virtue. The outside pressures of a society in which both virtue and sensibility were highly revered doubtless nurtured this problem of incompatible desires, but Rousseau does not take this position. Emma Bovary's tragedy is also the product of a psychological conflict. Flaubert takes into account both her inner flaws of sensuality and self-centeredness and the problems involved in reconciling dull provincial surroundings with nonrealistic expectations of life. Although Gervaise

Coupeau is a victim of heredity and environment, she is not totally destroyed until she herself contributes to her downfall through lax morals and "gourmandise."

There is considerable variation in the depth of the author's perception of and interest in the heroines. Manon and La Esmeralda are beautiful but shallow creatures, who stir men's passions and are the objects of men's attentions, but the men remain the important figures in the novels. While Atala is very nearly in the same category, her own psychological struggles do figure importantly. The remaining three, Julie, Emma, and Gervaise, are not merely the feminine interest in the novel, but are the protagonists, and the character development of each is extensive. It is in these same works that the psychological viewpoint is emphasized as it is not in the others.

The place where death takes place and the witnesses to it are also of interest, for these circumstances reflect to some extent the authors' themes. Two heroines die in the American wilderness (exoticism); two die at home in their own bed (psychological drama); one dies a public death on the gallows (sociological concern); and the last in extreme poverty on a bed of old straw (sociological concern). All with the exception of Gervaise Coupeau are loved and mourned by someone. Three

receive some sort of solace from religion. There is no priest at Manon's death and no mention of any last-minute prayers, though Prévost uses several ecclesiastical expressions in the death paragraph. The religious dimension of the scene is provided, not by Manon but by des Grieux, who sees the death as God's excessively rigorous punishment. In complete contrast, the faith of Julie de Wolmar is one of the dominant themes of Rousseau's handling of her death scene, her personal variety of Protestantism giving her such comfort that her death is without anguish. The religion in Atala is Catholic and also of central importance to the death scene, both as partial cause of the tragedy and as hope and consolation after it. The direct responsibility for La Esmeralda's death, however, is laid to the frustrated priest, Claude Frollo, the unnatural celibacy of the clergy coming under Hugo's attack. There is no priest in attendance at the hanging. The fervor of Emma Bovary's religion, which fluctuates considerably both before and during death, is not sufficiently powerful in the end to shut out the terrors of eternity. In the case of Gervaise Coupeau, as noted in the Zola chapter, it is no longer a question of "le Ciel" to which she will go but of "la terre."

All the comparisons made so far have concerned somewhat external details, but even these reflect themes and theses of the various authors. Most of these also affect the "scénologie," or art of constructing a scene. A scene in a novel is created by being either dramatic or visual or both. The immediate and underlying causes of death, its place, its metaphysical aspects, the characters present, and the understanding of the heroine herself are all parts of the scene, either of what one sees or what one feels through the drama.

The degree of preliminary preparation for the death scene varies from Prévost's novel, where there is none, to Zola's, whose death scene gets most of its impact from the continuous presages of that event scattered throughout his work. Hugo has a minimum of prophetic passages until quite near the hanging itself, but he does use the sustained spider-fly metaphor to help tie the events together. In direct contrast, the first appearance of Atala has a very close relationship to her subsequent death scene, and there are also further hints of that tragedy. With Rousseau and Flaubert, as with Zola, the development of the psychological problem which culminates in death, is an integral part of their novel.

To what extent are the six death scenes either

dramatic or visual? Prévost's death scene gets its drama, for the most part, from its point of view: the fact that the narrator, des Grieux, is also the tragic hero in the scene and shifts from one role to the other in the tale he recounts. The style of his narration yields clues to the varying degrees of his emotional involvement. There is little description but rather an evocation of the wilderness in which they find themselves, expressed mostly in terms of their vulnerability. There is some visual action and there are also a few lines of realistic reference to physical symptoms. The death scene of Manon is very compact and there is not sufficient space devoted to it to accomplish much more.

With Rousseau, the dramatic quality of the scene or scenes is much more important than the descriptive or visual. The gradual revelation of the psychology of Julie de Wolmar, or the unraveling of the mystery of why she is able to die so differently from others, constitutes the drama of her death. There is a minimum of realistic description of her final illness and very little description of anything else. Nevertheless, her bedroom, whose emotional atmosphere is conveyed in detail, serves as the constant background for all that takes place there and the several well-developed supporting characters add to the over-all drama.

Chateaubriand's Atala is the most unusual of the six novels in terms of drama and visuality, because in it the author first approaches the death from a dramatic point of view, then recounts the burial in very detailed descriptive language. For the most part the dramatic chapter is written in dialogue form and reflects the principles of Classical tragedy. There are, however, several breaks in the drama in which the narrator helps the reader see the action by briefly describing the scene. It was noted earlier how these resemble Diderot's famous dramatic tableaux. The lighting was also found to be quite theatrical. In the burial scene Chateaubriand abandons the didactic monologues of the drama and lets us see the tragedy and feel the personal emotions of the narrator-actor Chactas. There is a very full description both of nature and of events. The vocabulary as well as the location contributes to the exoticism of the passage. Chateaubriand uses carefully chosen nouns, verbs, and adjectives to appeal to all the senses in order to convey his scene both visually and emotionally.

More than any of the authors in the group under consideration, Hugo is concerned with creating a scene which is simultaneously dramatic and visual. This is hardly surprising in view of his literary theories concerning the combining of the genres of the theater and

the novel. The effort toward drama in Notre-Dame de Paris is such that it often seems overdone, particularly in the Gudule scene. The drama that takes place at the moment of the hanging is, however, much more restrained and consequently more effective. Often in the same sentence where there is an idealistic view of La Esmeralda, there is also considerable realism. The remarkably visual quality of Hugo's scene is attained less by description than one would expect, though there is one very beautiful passage describing the background. Like Chateaubriand, he makes use of lighting effects and tableaux. The sophisticated technique of viewing the death scene from both the street level and from the great distance of the towers of Notre-Dame, with characters involved in the drama stationed at both levels, brings to this passage an extra dimension not present in any of the others.

Flaubert's death scene is also very visual and dramatic. The descriptions are for the most part quite realistic and notable for choice of detail: in a roomful of objects, a very few are selected to convey the impression given by the room as a whole. Flaubert is equally eclectic in choosing his vocabulary. Usually each word adds quite specific qualities to the total effect, often reaching the reader through one or more of the senses. Although most of the descriptions are realistic, as

stated, some are more impressionistic. Shifts in tone, quite characteristic of Flaubert, who seems to delight in the juxtaposition of contrasting elements, also carry over into the dramatic aspects of the death scene. The horrors of the tragedy taking place in Emma's bedroom are frequently interrupted by the ironic humor of peripheral scenes. The tone of the final moments of the death scene is also subject to quick change, adding a dramatic dimension in itself. The careful integration of the death scene into the entire novel and the remarkable character delineation of the participants also contribute to its dramatic qualities.

In addition to these scenic qualities of drama and visuality, one element which was found to be present in all the novels studied is lyricism. Whether the death is written in a style associated with Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, or Naturalism, the death scene contains at least some poetic prose. This lyricism is present in varying degrees and not necessarily to the extent that one might expect of a given author. For example, it is perhaps least significant in the death scene of La Nouvelle Héloïse, whose author is otherwise well known for his poetic prose. Rousseau seems to have conserved this stylistic tool to give all power possible to Julie's last love letter. Hugo, too, might have been expected to use

poetic prose more than he does. His one description of nature is among the most poetic passages of all those in the study, but it is only a very small part of the long chapters devoted to the dramatic presentation of the death. Hugo's reluctance to use metaphor, so prevalent in the rest of the novel, is also rather surprising. There is, of course, the sustained metaphor of the spider and the fly. One can only guess that Hugo is above all determined to be dramatic and visual in this important scene of his dramatic novel.

Imagery, metaphor, alliteration, interior rhyme, and rhythm all are important to Chateaubriand's rendering of Atala's death and burial. As was noted in the Atala chapter, Chateaubriand himself referred to his novel as a sort of poem, part dramatic and part descriptive. There are some lyric passages in the dramatically presented death scene, while the poetic quality of the narrative burial scene is quite consistently sustained. There is a similarly constant poetic effort in Prévost's death and burial scene, perhaps made possible by its brevity. Both Chateaubriand and his predecessor use periphrasis more than will be the case with the later authors, probably a reflection of the era to which they belonged. The Indian-flavored vocabulary and the lack of restraint in Atala, however, give its poetry a very

different feeling.

The poetry of Flaubert tends to reflect the importance of the passage rather than the subject matter: it may be present in a passage depicting the rite of Extreme Unction or in one describing final physical symptoms. It usually consists of the use of liquids and nasals, of alliteration, simile, balanced or lengthening rhythms, and an occasional alexandrine fragment. The matter of interrelationships of words, so important to poetry, is given more attention by Flaubert and Chateaubriand than any of the other authors. With Flaubert, however, the poetry, used for emphasis and power, is always the servant of prose.

Zola, who made his death scene in so many ways different from those of his predecessors, was sufficiently aware of the power of poetic prose to wish to incorporate it into the closing paragraphs of his novel. There is no simile or metaphor, but a strong attention to rhythm and the repetition of sounds. The symbolism of Bazouge is also, of course, poetic in nature.

So far in this conclusion, the emphasis has been on matters wherein there are similarities among the six authors. Now let us consider what individual tendencies there appear to be among them. Prévost writes with more economy and clarity, with more apparent lack of effort,

than any of the others. Rousseau goes farthest in making the death scene a vehicle for his own theories and beliefs. Chateaubriand means to be equally didactic but alongside his moral teachings is a charming picture of the passion which he pretends to condemn. His prose is the most consistently poetic of the group considered, and there is more exoticism in his work than in any other. Hugo is the only one of the authors who sets his scene in public and on a rather grand scale. He is also the master of understatement following amplification. Flaubert's unique characteristic is ironic humor. Zola is the only one of the authors who writes, at times, in non-literary language.

The temptation to compare the six death scenes from an historical point of view is too great to be entirely denied. Michèle Gérard, in fact, encouraged this by her article quoted in my introduction, in which she recommended that such a comparison be made between the treatment of one literary theme "de génération en génération." Here such a comparison is limited by the fact that so few examples are involved that no real literary trends can be properly substantiated. However, it is important to remember that the novels treated in this study are not just any novels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

but for each period are the outstanding one, in which the heroine dies.

Prévost's brief account of Manon's death seems to bear within it the seeds of most of the literary qualities to be found in more elaborate form in later writings. Although it reflects much of the Classicism of the seventeenth century, many Romantic themes and practices are present. The effort toward making the reader see and feel what is taking place has its beginnings here, though it is somewhat limited. The poetry of the prose is most significant and continues through all the writers studied. In many ways, Zola's death scene will be closer to Prévost's than to any other, as though the literary trends had come full circle. Like Prévost, Zola will be brief and poetic. There is little description in either, but the vocabulary is extremely different, Zola having abandoned the strictly literary style. Just as Prévost's Classical traits reflect the era to which he belongs, Zola's work is a product of the nineteenth century's dawning concern for the lower classes.

Rousseau seems to stand outside any logical progression in his chronological position between Prévost and Chateaubriand. His psychological perception ranks with

the later authors, Flaubert and Zola. Like these, he also relies heavily on making the death scene an integral part of the novel. But although he himself is known for descriptions of nature and poetic prose, these characteristics are not present to any extent in the death scenes of *Julie de Wolmar*. The dramatic quality is emphasized instead. Certain other tendencies of Rousseau are typical of the eighteenth century: the moralizing, the lengthiness, the effort toward logical presentation, and even the choice of the epistolary form itself.

Chateaubriand, though nearly seventy years later in time, shows a close kinship in his work to that of Prévost. The death is set in the New World and burial is in the wilderness; the prose is very poetic; and both narrator-heroes relive the event while recounting it at a later date. In many ways the death of Atala seems a great amplification of Manon's, much more attention being given to the description of the setting and to the presence of the Church.

Hugo chooses an interesting time in history rather than a remote country to give his novel an unusual and Romantic background. Like Chateaubriand he will follow Classical rules to create a tragedy, adding as did the earlier author efforts to make that tragedy

visual. At least in so far as these six novels are concerned, the effort toward "scénologie" in the death of the heroine reaches its zenith with Atala and Notre-Dame de Paris.

One cannot help wondering if it was Flaubert who brought an end to the apparent fashion for making a production of the death scene of the heroine. He uses all the techniques of his predecessors and very often the events are similar to those in the earlier novels. Emma Bovary takes poison; she says goodbye to her daughter like Julie de Wolmar; her sickroom also becomes the focal point of the actions of a tiny community; like Atala she undergoes the ceremony of Extreme Unction and the moment of actual dying is a very dramatic; Charles resembles Chactas at the wake and, reminiscent of both the young Indian and des Grieux, he throws dirt on the grave with his bare hands. Although there is an accompanying lyricism in Madame Bovary as in all the earlier death passages, the cold eye of realism is turned on these various events and it gives them a very different character. The poisoning brings on graphic descriptions of physical suffering; the interview with the child is a dismal failure; the exaltation produced by the Catholic ceremonies is temporary; death comes in anticipation, not

of heaven, but of the horrors of eternity; the black and white wake scene is produced by common, ordinary phenomena, often unpleasant in nature; only the event of Charles throwing on the dirt is untarnished. There are, as in the earlier novels, Diderot-like tableaux, but the sentimentality has disappeared. Flaubert also borrows Hugo's spider metaphor, but Emma's menacing insect, far from being anything so grand as destiny, is instead her own boredom. In the manner of Rousseau, Flaubert is interested in the psychology behind the actions of his heroine rather than the actions themselves. But Flaubert, unlike Rousseau, does not make his heroine the living example of his ideology. Instead, Emma Bovary is actually the first heroine in this study since Prévost's Manon who does not represent an idealized woman. Once he has made the substitution of realism and ironic humor for idealization, Flaubert proceeds to write his death scene according to already established techniques.

As was pointed out earlier, Zola is the only one of the six authors who refuses to try to develop his scene in the now apparently traditional manner of making it dramatic and visual. Nevertheless, he still borrows techniques from his predecessors in order to give depth to his seemingly casual treatment of Gervaise's death.

The poetic qualities of the other writers and Hugo's method of understatement, following lengthy background material, are the stylistic ideas which Zola preserves from the writers who have gone before him.

Larousse defines "scénologie" as "l'art de la scène au théâtre." Jean Pommier extended the meaning to include the novel: "La pièce de théâtre, c'est une suite de scènes à faire; il n'en est guère autrement du roman."¹ The death scenes of the heroines of Prévost, Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Hugo, Flaubert and Zola are, indeed, closely related to their counterparts in the theater and their authors highly skilled in the art of scene building.

¹Créations en littérature, p. 22.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aristotle. Poetics. Translated by S. H. Butcher.
Introduction by Francis Fergusson. New York:
Hill and Wang, 1961.
- Chateaubriand, François-René de. Atala. Edited by
Pierre Reboul. Paris: Garnier-Flammarion,
1964.
- Flaubert, Gustave. Madame Bovary. Edited by Christian
Gauss. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1930.
- Gérard, Michèle. "La Déclaration d'amour dans le roman
romantique, étude de scénologie." Revue
d'Histoire Littéraire de la France, LXVIII
(Septembre-Octobre, 1968), 798-814.
- Hugo, Victor. Notre-Dame de Paris. Edited by Marius-
François Guyard. Paris: Garnier Frères,
1961.
- _____. "Quentin Durward." Review of Quentin Durward,
by Sir Walter Scott. La Muse Française, July,
1823. Edited by Jules Marsan. Société des
Textes français modernes. Paris: Edouard
Cornély et Cie., 1907-09, I, 25-39.
- Pommier, Jean. Créations en littérature. Paris:
Librairie Hachette, 1955.
- Prévost, Antoine-François. Histoire du Chevalier des
Grioux et de Manon Lescaut. Edited by Frédéric
Deloffre and Raymond Picard. Paris: Garnier
Frères, 1965.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. La Nouvelle Héloïse. Paris:
Garnier Frères, n.d.
- Zola, Émile. L'Assommoir. 2 vols. Paris: Charpentier,
1922.